

A NEW APPROACH TO ASIAN AMERICAN MINISTRY

A Professional Project

presented to

the Faculty of the

Claremont School of Theology

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

Daesun Chung

May 2001

This professional Project, completed by

Daesun Chung

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the
Claremont School of Theology in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Faculty Committee

Chan-Hie Kim
Chairperson
Paul R. Lake

5/7/01
Date

John R. L. Finneri
Dean



Due to extenuating circumstances, final edits were not completed for this project.

ABSTRACT

A NEW APPROACH TO ASIAN AMERICAN MINISTRY

by

Daesun Chung

Asian American churches, especially those in Southern California, face a number of challenges. Most first generation Asian American immigrants rely on their churches for more than just spiritual fulfillment. Meeting these needs alone is very difficult.

When an Asian American church attempts to minister to the second and subsequent generations, the challenges it faces increase exponentially. Having both a minister who can relate to first and later generations with equal ease, and an English ministry for the later generations, becomes necessary at that point. If a church is attempting to serve more than one ethnic or language group, it faces a new set of challenges in addition to those already mentioned.

This project examines many of these problems in detail, both those of first generation and later generations. Its primary focus is on multi-ethnic, multi-lingual churches, which can serve all generations of immigrants. Most issues in this project relate to Asian American churches specifically, but only because that is where the author's experience has been. Many of the challenges faced by Asian American churches are also faced by any other church attempting to minister to a group that is not strictly Caucasian.

In addition to the challenges faced by Asian American churches, the biblical background and definition of the Church is examined in detail, then related to Asian

American ministry. A biblical basis for multi-ethnic ministry is offered in relation to Asian American churches.

The project culminates in the description of a new model for ministry, which helps overcome many of the challenges faced by Asian American churches trying to create true multi-ethnic ministries. This approach is designed to be used by Asian American English speaking churches that wish to reach out to multi-generational ethnic families without alienating any family members. The purpose of this ministry model is to strengthen the English ministry while providing a place for non-English speaking family members to worship. However, applications of this ministry model need not be limited to Asian American churches. This ministry model will not solve all the problems related to becoming a truly multi-ethnic church, but it will help overcome many of the challenges.

Finally, a case study where this model was implemented is discussed. Cornerstone United Methodist Church in Fullerton, California, a Chinese American English speaking church, successfully created a Korean language ministry using this model, under the guidance of the author, who was pastor in charge at the time. Not only did their overall ministry increase through their new Korean congregation members, but the English congregation grew by the addition of the Korean children.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. Introduction	1
Problem Statement	1
Importance of the Problem	1
Thesis Statement	2
Definitions of Major Terms	2
Work Previously Done in the Field	6
Scope and Limitations of the Project	9
Procedure for Integration	10
Chapter Outline	10
2. The Church and Asian Immigrant Society	11
Introduction	11
Definition of the Word "Church"	12
Old Testament Meanings	13
New Testament Meanings	14
Significance of <i>ekklesia</i> for Today	15
Place of the Church in Asian American Lives	19
First Generation Asian American Immigrants	20
Second and Subsequent Generations	28
Summary	35
3. A Theological Basis for Multi-Ethnic Ministry	37
Introduction	37
Social and Cultural Context of Multi-Ethnic Ministry	37
Cultural or Ethnic Homogeneity vs. Mission Commonality	38
Existing Definitions of Multi-Ethnic Ministry	45
A Biblical Basis for Multi-Ethnic Ministry	46
Summary	49

4. Present Picture of Asian American Churches	50
Introduction	50
Characteristics of Asian American Churches	50
Degrees of Assimilation into Mainline Denominations	53
Common Issues of Asian American Churches	57
Space and Facilities	57
Second and Subsequent Generation Ministry	62
Summary	65
5. Mission Expansion Model	67
Introduction	67
Multi-Ethnicity of Asian American English Ministry	67
A New Approach to Asian American Ministry	69
Structure of the Mission Expansion Model	73
Steps to Launching a New Language Ministry	76
The Challenges This Model Can Bring.....	76
Summary	80
6. Case Study: Cornerstone United Methodist Church	82
Introduction	82
General Environment.....	83
The Challenges Cornerstone Faced with Its Outreach	84
Cornerstone's Long Term Ministry Goal and Rationale	85
Implementation of the Mission Expansion Model at Cornerstone	86
Family Zone	86
Summary	90
7. Conclusion	91
Bibliography	93

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Problem Statement

Asian American English-speaking churches typically cannot reach out to mixed-generation Asian American families without alienating non-English-speaking family members.

Importance of the Problem

Asian-American English-speaking churches have difficulty reaching out to their communities because of language and cultural barriers within their target families. Most of these families came to this country after 1965 when the immigration law was changed, and many adults retained their native language while learning English. Some of them became bilingual, yet many of them still speak limited English and often do not feel comfortable worshipping in their newly acquired language. At the same time, many of their children have adopted English as their primary language and the Western culture as their own.

While the adults want to go to a church that uses their native language, the children want to worship in an English-speaking setting. For this reason, many immigrant churches provide an English ministry. Unfortunately, many of these ministries are ineffective due to inadequate leadership, and the children want to participate in a vital English-speaking church. However, Asians have strong family ties, and therefore parents and children do not wish to go to separate churches.

Although the English-speaking Asian-American church is trying to reach out to the entire family, the adults often feel that the church only wants to minister to their children. This is an inevitable result of normal outreach programs that many of these churches conduct. Without handling this problem effectively, the church may not be able to care for the entire family.

Thesis Statement

Intentional development of multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Asian American churches will allow them to reach out to both English-speaking and non-English-speaking family members without alienating either.

Definitions of Major Terms

Asian American Church

A general term that refers to a church in the United States whose members are of Asian descent. It refers to either a church of one particular Asian ethnic group, or to a church where there is more than one Asian ethnic group represented. However, in this study, the term will refer primarily to Chinese American and Korean American congregations, as the author's experience has been mainly limited to these two groups.

Multi-Ethnic Church

A church that has a number of different ethnic groups, each with its own distinctive culture, coming together and operating as one church using the English language.

Multi-Lingual Church

A church whose membership comprises two or more different ethnic groups, each with its own distinctive culture and language but the same goal, mission, and church identity. The different groups operate under their own languages, but function as integral parts of each other's ministries, sharing leadership where needed or beneficial. The common language is English.

Shared Facility

Two or more congregations meeting side by side on the same property, sharing facilities for the purpose of Christian mission and ministry while maintaining separate communities and ministries. The congregation that owns the facility will be referred to as the hosting congregation, while any congregation that rents or uses the facility without owning it will be referred to as a nesting congregation.

First Generation

All immigrants who came to the United States as adults. In this paper, the term will refer to Asian Americans unless otherwise noted.

Second and Subsequent Generations

The people who were born in this country as children of Asian immigrants. "Second generation" refers to people born in this country to first generation immigrant parents. The expressions "third generation," "fourth generation," and so on will not

be used in this study due to complexities of identification. It is very difficult to identify a person with a particular immigrant generation when both parents are not of the same generation. For example, if a person's father is of the second generation and his mother is of the third, do we identify him with the third or fourth generation? In order to eliminate this kind of complexity, the author will use the inclusive term "subsequent generation" to denote all those beyond the second generation, regardless of their parents' generation(s).

Transgeneration

People who were born in their native country and immigrated to the United States in their early teens. They are bilingual and bicultural, able to understand both cultures and function appropriately in both communities.

Generation Gap

Generation gap refers to the differences between generations. However, in this study it will refer to the differences between first generation Asian immigrants and their descendants who were born in this country (second and subsequent generations).

Cultural Gap

The cultural differences between ethnic groups or generations of immigrants. The cultural gap between first generation parents and their children who were born in this country is often as severe as that which exists between ethnic groups.

Entry Program

A non-threatening and visitor-friendly outreach program with no religious overtones designed to bring outsiders into the church facility. For example, a Ping-Pong tournament sponsored by a church and held in the church fellowship hall is such a program. It is open to everyone in the community and does not proselytize. Thus, it is friendly to non-religious people.

Family Zone

Created as an entry program by the author, Family Zone is a program that helps Asian immigrant families as a whole reach their God-given potential to the fullest. For the parents, it provides education in both parenting and Bible knowledge and application. For the students, it provides academic aid to compliment and supplement the skills and concepts taught in school as well as Biblical knowledge and application.

Mission Expansion Model

An intentional outreach approach to forming a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual congregation. It is the model that an English-speaking congregation utilizes when reaching out to various ethnic language groups in its community with two intentions: one, to integrate the English-speaking people of these ethnic groups into the existing English language ministry; and two, to have them form faith communities in their own language and culture while becoming integral parts of the existing church. This study presupposes that the primary language used in ministry is English.

Work Previously Done in the Field

While cross-cultural evangelism is not a new field of study, integrated multi-ethnic ministry, particularly in the context of Asian-American ministry, is a fairly new area of emphasis. Because of this, very little study has been done in this and related fields. The author of this project has found the following resources very helpful.

In his book One New People, Manuel Ortiz reviews existing models of multiethnic ministry in order to enable churches to wrestle with issues related to multiethnicity in their own ministry context.¹ He recognizes that groups of people cannot be categorized simply by race in discussing cultural dynamics, since the cultural differences between different ethnic groups within the same race is so large that it cannot be ignored, particularly in multiethnic ministry. Ortiz provides the goal of multiculturalism and defines “multicongregational church” utilizing three models: renting, celebration, and integrative.

However, this book is not without a handicap. Ortiz makes the blanket statement that denominational ties would make racial and ethnic reconciliation smooth and ease the process of integration in multiethnic situations.² Unfortunately, although he uses as an example a church where all congregations are of the same denomination, he does not clearly show how this eases the integration process. Had he done so, this volume could

¹Manuel Ortiz, One New People (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1996).

²Ibid., 72.

have been of greater value. Despite this limitation, this book has many useful insights and makes great strides toward understanding multiethnic ministry.

One of the few studies done so far regarding English-speaking Asian American ministries is a Doctor of Ministry project done at Claremont School of Theology by Nak-In Kim, focusing on the Korean American community.³ This volume offers valuable information that enables its readers to understand the struggles, values, and identity of English-speaking Korean Americans. It emphasizes, but is not limited to, young adults, particularly the college age group. While this is an important study, it lacks a sensitivity and critical evaluation of the cultural and value differences that exist between the transgeneration and the second generation. Kim assumes that transgeneration, who have faced the same language and cultural barriers as first generation, and second-generation immigrants, who have not, share the same struggles, values, and identity. However, there is a significant distinction between them, which should not be ignored. If this important distinction were taken into account, the findings of the survey might portray a somewhat different picture.

Theology and Ministry in a Shared Facility provides a theological basis for shared facility.⁴ Sandra Heer argues that churches in such a relationship need to move beyond simply sharing buildings and start sharing mission and ministry with their partners. She argues further that the phrase “shared facility” is problematic, because it implies what

³Nak-In Kim, A Model Ministry to Transitional and Second Generation Korean Americans, D. Min. project, Claremont School of Theology, 1991 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1991).

⁴Sandra A. Heer, Theology and Ministry in a Shared Facility, D. Min. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1993 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1993).

holds the churches together is buildings and facilities, not people, mission, or ministry. This volume also provides some helpful insights into conflict resolution. While it is a valuable resource, it fails to provide either a strategic plan or step-by-step guidelines as to how churches can move from simply sharing facilities to sharing ministries. Had Heer provided this information, this volume could have been of greater value.

John Root's work Building Multi-Racial Churches focuses on building multi-racial churches in England.⁵ Root uses the term "race" to refer not only to apparent physical difference of skin color but also to social classes. He makes his case based on the understanding that multi-racial churches are possible only when the leaders are convinced that "God wills for the church to reflect the ethnic" composition of the community. Root provides some helpful suggestions on how to overcome racism and to build multi-racial churches in England. However, the situation in England appears to be different from the context of this study. Therefore, the author's suggestions, while informative, may not provide a workable solution.

Kenneth Fong's D. Min. thesis for Fuller Seminary, Insights for growing Asian-American Ministries, explores how Asian Americans are marginalized in the United States, and goes on to state that English-speaking Asian Americans are more marginalized than Asian Americans with limited English, particularly in the context of the Church.⁶ It treats Americanized English-speaking Asian Americans as a new subculture that does not readily

⁵John Root, Building Multi-Racial Churches, Latimer Studies, ~~vol~~ 47 (Oxford: Latimer House, 1994).

⁶Kenneth James Uyeda Fong, Insights for Growing Asian-American Ministries, D. Min. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1990 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1991)

identify with mono-cultural, immigrant-oriented churches. It strongly presents an increasing necessity for ministries that meet the needs of English-speaking Asian-Americans and provides an actual example of how such a ministry has been effectively implemented at the Evergreen Baptist Church of Los Angeles.

Scope and Limitations of the Project

This study will present an idea of how an English-speaking Asian American congregation can address its outreach difficulties by intentionally developing its ministry to be multi-ethnic and multi-lingual. Chapter 2 will briefly discuss the Biblical definition of the word *ekklesia* and its significance for Asian immigrants, as well as the present challenges common to many Asian American churches. As will be seen in Chapter 4, the author will illustrate a way to implement this intentional approach to multi-ethnic and multi-lingual ministry. The reader should note that the main purpose of creating a new language ministry using this approach is to grow and strengthen the existing English language ministry, not to simply create the language ministry or differentiate the church from other area churches.

This study introduces complex social issues and dynamics found in immigrant communities but will not fully discuss these issues, as such a discussion would require several volumes. In addition, the administrative structure of multi-ethnic and multi-lingual congregations will not be discussed in depth because each church is unique in this regard.

Procedure for Integration

This project will largely involve the collection of information from ministry experiences and library research.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 addresses the Biblical definition of the Church, how Asian Americans view it, and its role in their immigrant experiences. Chapter 3 presents a brief overview of the theological basis for multi-ethnic ministry, introducing its social and cultural context, discussing the importance of mission commonality over homogeneity, presenting some definitions, and reviewing its Biblical background. Chapter 4 offers an overview of the Asian American churches' present challenges, such as shared facility issues, generational and cultural conflicts, and English ministry difficulties. Chapter 5 introduces the idea of inertia versus change. It discusses why the church wants to stay the way it has been with its own ethnic identity and how it can envision a wider purpose and possibilities. This chapter further describes a Mission Expansion Model and briefly introduces Family Zone, which was the entry program for Cornerstone United Methodist Church in Fullerton. However, Family Zone is not the only way to begin this approach; this chapter shows how other programs can be used for this expansion idea. Chapter 6 examines an actual case in which this idea was implemented. The approach Cornerstone used will be argued as a possible model for other settings. Finally, Chapter 7 integrates the project findings in the form of a summary and conclusion, and will identify possible next steps.

CHAPTER 2

The Church and Asian Immigrant Society

Introduction

It has been said that the Church is an organism, not an organization.¹ Life is what separates an “organism” from an “organization” – one has life and the other does not. However, defining life is not an easy task. Can anyone define “life” succinctly and precisely? Likewise, defining “organism” is not easy because it pushes us back to the same question of defining life. Maybe this is why someone said, “The Church . . . is better felt than telt.”² Church is not a structured institution. It is a “mode of existence,’ a way of living. The mystery of the Church, even in its institutional dimension, is deeply bound to the being of man, to the being of the world, and to the very being of God.”³ In this chapter, we will discuss the biblical definition of the word “Church” and its significance in Asian Americans’ lives.

The Bible uses many different images to describe the Church. It is depicted as a city (Heb. 12:22⁴), a family (Eph. 3:15), a flock (1 Peter 5:2), a candlestick (Rev. 1:20),

¹Prince Emmanuel Burroughs, Growing a Church (Nashville: ~~Covenant~~ ^{Convention} Press, 1936), 1.

²Russell P. Spittler, The Church (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1977), 16.

³John D. Zizioulas, Being as Communion (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), 15.

⁴All scripture quotations and references are taken from the American Standard Version (ASV).

God's field and building (1 Cor. 3:9), God's household (Eph. 2:19), even a vineyard (Matt. 21:41). While this variety of images helps us understand the nature of the "Church" more clearly, it also implies that they are used because it is not easy to succinctly describe what "Church" is.

In this chapter, we will discuss how the word "Church" or its equivalents, such as *ekklesia* or *qahal*, was used in biblical days and its current significance in the lives of Asian American immigrants.

Definition of the Word "Church"

The word "Church" is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*. It is derived from the verb *ekkaleo*, which literally means, "to call out." This may suggest that the Church can be regarded as "a people called out," or "a people separated from the rest of the world" to be God's.⁵ However, we cannot simply state our own ideas gathered through an etymological study of the word and consider it a proper definition. Instead, we must have a valid reason for defining the word "Church" in this way.

The early Greek-speaking people used the word *ekklesia* much more broadly than what has been used in the church. *Ekklesia* did not have a particular religious or theological meaning in the secular Greek world. It was used by both Christians and non-Christians alike to describe both groups' gatherings.⁶ For the secular Greeks it referred to

⁵Robert L. Saucy, The Church in God's Program (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 11-12.

⁶Paul S. Minear, "Church, Idea Of," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 1, ed. G. A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 607.

citizens who were called out for legislative duty,⁷ but for the Christians, it had a more specific meaning, referring to the people of God who gathered together for the purpose of worshipping and honoring Him.

Old Testament Meanings

The Septuagint (LXX) translates *qahal* as *ekklesia*, which appears almost one hundred times. *Qahal*, like *ekklesia*, means “gathering” or “meeting.” It was used to describe gatherings of any and every purpose, military (Gen. 49:6; Num. 22:4; Ezek. 16:40) as well as civic. *Qahal* described the gathering of prophets (1 Sam. 19:20), princes (Num. 16:3), those who gathered to do evil (Ps. 26:5), or angels (Ps. 89:5). There is no technical meaning suggested for the word *qahal* in the Hebrew Old Testament nor its Greek translation *ekklesia* in the Old Testament itself. The technical meaning of *ekklesia* grew with the development of the Church.⁸

It has been suggested that *qahal* became a technical term for Israel, referring to the people of God, as a way of connecting the Old Testament Israel to the New Testament Church. Newton Flew saw a deep connection between *ekklesia* of the New Testament and *qahal* of the Old Testament, both referring to the people of God. He suggests six reasons for this. First, there is a strong conviction in both Judaism and Christianity that the God of Israel is a redeeming God, whose activity is revealed in human history.

⁷F. F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles (London: Tyndale Press, 1951), 136.

⁸Minear, 608.

Second, understanding “Israel” as “the people of God” significantly affected the formation of the Christian community. This is undoubtedly evident in Jesus’ teaching and deeds.

Third is the concept of the remnant. The prophets of the Old Testament saw Israel, in general, as disobedient, rebellious, and destined to receive God’s judgment. Still, a remnant of believers remained within faithless Israel as the object of God’s love. Fourth, the idea of the remnant continues in the New Testament with the disciples. The twelve were meant to be the nucleus of the true Israel and the remnant would include all believers thereafter.⁹

Flew’s fifth reason is Israel’s mission for the world which continues with the Church, and sixth is the vision of the saints of God for the end time. All six factors are present in both in Judaism and Christianity. Jesus does not speak of New Israel but acts as though the disciples he gathered are the beginning of it. Perhaps in Jesus’ mind the *ekklesia* existed even before he came to earth.¹⁰

New Testament Meanings

The New Testament usage of *ekklesia* is inclined much more toward a religious gathering, although it was occasionally used for a secular assembly (Acts 19:32, 39, 40). The word was used to describe a community meeting in assembly, but this community was recognized as *ekklesia* even apart from the gathering place. In the New Testament, *ekklesia* was used to denote a meeting of Christians for worship in a particular place

⁹George E. Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 109.

¹⁰R. Newton Flew, Jesus and His Church (London: Epworth Press, 1943), 35-36.

(Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Ps. 2). It was also used to indicate the entire group of believers living in one geographical area – Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1), Laodicea (Col. 4:16), the cities of Judea (Gal. 1:22), and Galatia (Gal. 1:2). In other places, *ekklesia* was used to refer to all believers everywhere (Col. 1:18, 24; Eph. 1:22; 3:10, 21; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6).

It is important to reiterate that the same word, *ekklesia*, was used to describe both a local congregation and the believers of the world altogether. This suggests that the church is not to be understood “numerically” but “organically.” The Church Universal is not to be comprehended as a combination of all the local churches in the world, but rather as a macrocosm of each community of faith, regardless of its size. Thus, a local congregation, no matter how small it may be, is not “a part of the Church” but is “the Church,” whose existence and faith are expressed in a local area. The authority and power of Christ is available to every local community of believers so that “each congregation functions as the universal Church.”¹¹

Significance of *ekklesia* for Today

Understanding the Church organically forces us to reflect on its purpose and characteristics. The question one needs to raise is: what constitutes the Church – in other words, what makes it different, or who is the Church? As noted above, the Church is the community of people whose existence and purpose are found solely in the call of God. This call is for us to separate ourselves from the rest of the world in order to be God’s

¹¹Ladd, 537.

own and to lead others into that same covenant with God. This call began with Abraham, eventually reached us, and will continue on into future generations.

A brief review of Israel's history will help us to see how this call was manifested in the people of God and how this call is related to us today. God called Abraham to leave his home and kindred and go to the land God would show him. He was called out for a purpose. He was to be made a great nation and all the people of the earth would be blessed through him and his descendants (Gen. 12:1-3). From the very beginning, God's people were called out from the rest to be in a covenant relationship with God. And to those who entered into this covenant relationship, the covenant was a great blessing, and at the same time a great responsibility: they were to lead others into the same relationship with God. That was how others were to be "blessed through Abraham": blessed by God through faith.

Abraham and his family went to Canaan and lived there. Through their presence the Canaanites learned about God; in a way, Abraham and his family were missionaries in that land. Many years later, after Abraham and his son Isaac died, there was a great drought in the land. So Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, and his family went to Egypt for food. The descendants of Jacob (Israel) lived a prosperous life in Egypt for many generations. While they were in Egypt, the Egyptians learned to fear the Lord because of Joseph, Jacob's eleventh son, who became a governor of the land. Again they were the messengers of God. Then in the later part of their stay in Egypt, a new Pharaoh took the throne and made Israelites the slaves of Egypt. While they were in the distress of slavery, God sent Moses to deliver them out of their misery through the Passover. On the night of Passover, the Israelites painted the doorposts with the blood of the lamb. Ceil and Moishe

Rosen observed that as the Israelites painted the lintel and the doorposts with the blood, they literally drew the image of the bloody cross as if the Cross is the way of God's salvation.¹² Through this Passover and Israel's exodus from Egypt, God declared to the world that there was no other God and God's people were special. "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son" (Hos. 11:1). Here again, God saved his people from slavery and restored them, and his people became missionaries to their surroundings. The nations that heard of God's mighty act of salvation feared the Lord (Josh. 2:8-11, 5:1).

However when the Israelites, God's chosen people, failed to trust God in taking the Promised Land, they ended up in the wilderness wandering around aimlessly for forty years (Num. 13:1-33; Deut. 1:34-37). After forty years in the wilderness, they finally entered the Promised Land, but life in the land of milk and honey ended in exile. Moses warned Israelites about this before they entered the Promised Land:

Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in his ways and to fear him. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which he has given you Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the Lord your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroys before you, so you shall perish,

¹²Ceil Rosen and Moishe Rosen, Christ in the Passover (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978) 30-32.

because you would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord your God.¹³

This is exactly what happened to Israel. Like Moses warned them, Israel disobeyed God and went after other gods. They broke the covenant, rejected God's law, ignored and despised God's messengers to the point that God had no choice but to punish them. However, this punishment was not to destroy but to save them. It was an invitation, designed to bring them back into the covenant relationship. When the people of Israel repented of their sins and cried out to the Lord for his deliverance, God called them out of Babylon just as he called them out of Egypt. They were restored once again to their own land and to the call to remain faithful as God's people and to lead others to the same covenant.

God's covenant, however, is not limited only to Israelites; rather it is extended to all the nations of the earth. This is to be realized through the blood of the lamb, Jesus Christ. God paints Christ's blood on the lintel of each person's heart, leads them out of the slavery of sin, and grants them a new covenant in Christ. The purpose of Jesus Christ's passion and resurrection was to call all people in the world to redeem them from their sins and to bring them to the ultimate Promised Land. God would do this using his people who are already in the covenant as his instrument. In other words, all nations in the world would be blessed through faith generated by the witness of the Church.

Thus, the Church is to be understood as the people of God, called out of or separated from the rest of the world. This is done in order for them to be delivered from the power of sin for the purpose of having an eternal relationship with the Lord and to

¹³Deut. 8:6-10, 18-20

lead others to the same relationship. The Church is an instrument God uses to bring all people to reconcile with Him.¹⁴ In his first letter, Peter reminds us that

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (2:9)

God's people are not just called to enjoy his salvation for themselves but also to bring others into the covenant with God. This call obviously includes sharing the gospel as well as living out the good news.

Peter uses the word "holy" to describe the Church. The Greek word *hagios*, which is translated as "holy," has the root meaning of being "different." The Church is a community that is different from any other organization or organism. Its difference lies in the fact that it is chosen for the special purpose of God.¹⁵

Place of the Church in Asian American Lives

Now that we have a good understanding of what the Church is, we can investigate what it means to Asian American immigrants and how its purposes of being "called out" and "being holy" are carried out in Asian American immigrant society. As we discuss this, it is important for us to see how first generation immigrants view the Church and how that may compare to the views of second and subsequent generations. It would also be valid

¹⁴John R. W. Stott, One People (Downer's Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1971), 22-24.

¹⁵William Barclay, trans., The Acts of the Apostles, rev. ed., Daily Study Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 78.

to study whether there is a difference in this view between early and more recent first generation immigrants.

First Generation Asian American Immigrants

First generation immigrants' experience has always been very hard regardless of when they come to the United States. However, their struggles have not always been similar. The early immigrants' situation was very different from that of recent immigrants. Their needs were different, and the Church's involvement in their lives was different. Consequently, what the Church meant for the early immigrant community was different from what it means now.

Early First Generation Immigrants. From the very beginning of Asian American immigrant history, the church was far more than just gathering to worship. It was a social service agency, it was a place of fellowship among people of the same cultural and language background, it was a support group, it was a place of information, it was school, and it was even a hospital.

William Speer and his wife, medical doctors who served in Canton as missionaries, started their ministry among the Chinese in San Francisco using their medical skills. The Speers recognized the urgent medical needs among the Chinese immigrants and opened an infirmary as part of their mission. This medical mission was greatly needed among the Chinese for there were no medical services available to them. This, however, does not mean that there was no hospital where they lived. It simply means that "Chinese were not

allowed in the American hospitals at that time.”¹⁶ Such discriminatory practices put the Chinese and other Asians in a very difficult position. In that situation, the Speers’ medical mission was a great help. When the Chinese came to see the Speers, however, they received not only medical help, but spiritual help as well.¹⁷ To the early Asian immigrants, Church was the place where they could receive much needed help.

As a way of fulfilling their social mandate, the early immigrant church provided another service — teaching English. No doubt the most difficult challenges the immigrants faced were language and cultural barriers; having someone to teach them English made them very grateful. Another missionary, Otis Gibson, who served in Foochow, China, started English classes in San Francisco. His intention was not only to establish a church with the people he reached with these English classes, but also to continue to provide a necessary service.¹⁸

There are many other examples of the Church being more than just a weekend worship gathering. The Church was a place of hope, comfort, and fellowship. An early immigrant’s life in the new land was not easy to say the least, particularly for Asian immigrants, who had to bear many a toil. Their hearts were burdened with the thought that, when they left their home countries, they were neglecting their filial duty as children to support and care for their parents. Some even left their spouses and family behind.

¹⁶Felix Liu, A Comparative Study of Selected Growing Chinese Churches in Los Angeles County, ~~D. Missiology~~ thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1981 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1981), 44.

D. Miss.

¹⁷Ibid., 37-38.

¹⁸Ibid., 39-40.

They were emotionally torn and haunted with an unquenchable nostalgia. Their physical labor was severe and often unbearable. This was common to all early Asian immigrants.

It was particularly difficult for early Korean immigrants, many of whom were not used to heavy labor. Many of the first Korean immigrants were elite and well educated people who had never had any experience doing farm work. But when they came to America, their job was working the sugarcane farms in Hawaii. They were treated no better than slaves.

Mr. Hong Kee Lee, a living witness to the situation at that time, shares his story in a personal interview with Tongshik Ryu.

We had to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to get ready to go to work. We had to be at the farm by 5:30 in the morning and start working until 4:30 in the afternoon. We had a 30-minute lunch break at noon, but that was the one and only break for the whole day. We could not even stretch, or smoke a cigarette. When we got tired and slow the foreman whipped us. When the foreman called us he never called us by name but by numbers. Each laborer has an identification number just like prisoners. We were treated not as human beings but as oxen and horses . . . We worked six days a week and Sunday was our day off. But there was nothing to do. There was no recreation facility of any kind.¹⁹

Early immigrant life was extremely difficult in many ways. At the turn of the century, Anglo-Saxon racists put down the so called "inferior races" who were coming from Asia and Southern and Eastern Europe. The Anglo-Saxons' racism was fueled by Charles Darwin's evolutionary theories of biology and social science. Asian immigrants

¹⁹Tongshik Ryu, A History of Christ United Methodist Church, 1903-1988 (Honolulu: Christ United Methodist Church, 1988), 29-30.

were believed to be incapable of assimilating into the mainstream, and were grossly misunderstood and severely mistreated by that same mainstream.

According to Thomas F. Gossett, the Chinese were treated as “the most debased people on the face of the earth.”²⁰ He further observed how the law against Chinese was enforced.

As early as 1854, the Chinese in California were barred from testimony in courts in cases involving whites. The reasoning of the Supreme Court of California in arriving at this direction was that since the Indians were not allowed to testify in the courts against whites and since the Chinese and the Indians were of the same race, the Indians having many centuries ago come from China, the law which applied to the Indians should also apply to the Chinese.²¹

Such gross injustice was not just a Chinese issue; it was all Asians’ common issue. Furthermore, their suffering was not limited to the first generation immigrants, but was extended even to their children, especially in the area of education. Although Asian children’s IQs were high, they were segregated from other children in school for purely racial reasons. Woon Young Paek quotes from Eliot G. Mears’ book, Resident Orientals on the American Pacific Coast:

The governing body of the school district shall have power . . . to establish separate schools for Indian children and for children of Chinese, Japanese, and of other Mongolian parentage. When such separate schools are established, Indian children, or children of

²⁰Thomas F. Gossett, Race (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963), 290.

²¹Ibid.

Chinese, Japanese, or Mongolian parentage must not be admitted into any other school.²²

All this systematic discrimination and other forms of prejudice, combined with cultural and language barriers, added even more stress to the already difficult immigrant life — a life filled with loneliness, homesickness, and emotional stress. They needed psychological and spiritual support from one another. And they turned to the Church and to their own communities to seek for comfort and consolation.

The main interests and functions of the early Asian American churches were to comfort fellow workers, to evangelize non-Christians, and to help Christians cope with emotional and social crises with faith. The Church, for the early immigrants, was a place of comfort, hope, support, healing, and education. These churches had strong social concerns regardless of their ethnic background. They were the people called out by God to provide a home to the weary immigrants away from their homes.

Recent First Generation Immigrants. Although the intensity of difficulty in adjusting to the new land may be different, the experiences first generation immigrants go through are essentially the same whether they are early or more recent immigrants. The language and cultural barriers are still major hurdles all first generation immigrants have to overcome. The difference in intensity of the difficulty, however, may come from the readiness of society to receive the immigrants. As mentioned above, early Chinese immigrants did not have adequate medical assistance. They were not even allowed in American hospitals. English-language school and other social benefits were not available

²²Woon Young Paek, Worldview Change and the Korean American Youth Ministry in the Korean Immigrant Church, Ph. M. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1989 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1989), 26.

for them. They experienced tremendous discrimination in nearly every conceivable way. All of this made the adjustment much more difficult for early immigrants than for more recent immigrants who have many social benefits readily available to them.

Even opportunities for work and the availability of social services for immigrants have improved dramatically compared to when the early immigrants first came to America. Moreover, the people's view of Asian immigrants and American policy toward them have changed so much that most recent immigrants don't have a clue as to how difficult it was for an Asian American to live in this country at the turn of the last century. However, adjusting to and assimilating into life in a new land is far from comfortable or easy even for recent immigrants. Moving from one location to another is always difficult, and adjusting to a totally different cultural setting and lifestyle is even more so. No matter how much things have improved over the past century or so, acquiring a new culture and language and overcoming multiple barriers is extremely difficult, to say the least. In addition to these difficulties, they also have to deal with "employment discrimination and anti-immigrant scapegoating."²³ For many of these people, the Church has played a major role in helping them adjust to their new journey and it continues to do so.

The immigrant Church's concern for not only spiritual and religious issues, but also for social matters, continues to appeal to the immigrants. "Approximately 70 percent of Korean-Americans" attend church on a regular basis,²⁴ but not all for religious reasons.

²³Edward T. Chang and Jeannette Diaz-Veizades, Ethnic Peace in the American City: Building Community in Los Angeles and Beyond (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 104.

²⁴Ibid.

According to Chun-Il Cho, approximately 30 percent of Korean-American church members do not believe in God, yet they not only attend churches regularly, but also join and support them as members. But their reasons for joining the church are other than religious. Following are the reasons these people have stated why they attend and join Korean-American churches even though they do not believe in God.

Reason for Attending Church	Percentage
To solve the problems they encounter in America	24
To understand the worship service in their own language	19
To be with other Koreans	17
To become a Christian	10
Ethnic Identity	8
Other reasons	4
No response	18

(Modified from Cho's statistics.²⁵)

This finding clearly suggests that non-believing members and visitors of immigrant churches view the Church at least as a place where they can get help for their social and personal needs. This is also true for Christians, who come to Church not only for spiritual reasons, but for social reasons as well.

A retired Korean pastor shared a story of his ministry among Korean immigrants, which took place in New York City for many years before he retired. According to him, at the beginning of his work in New York among Koreans, he had to do a lot of "little things" for his recent immigrant parishioners. One time, a parishioner called the pastor and said that the light in his apartment did not work. The parishioner had been in the States for only a few days and did not speak English, nor did he know anything about

electricity, and he did not know where to turn, so he called the pastor to come and help. When the pastor got there the problem was nothing but the circuit breaker – something had tripped it. All he had to do was turn the breaker switch back on. Another time, the same pastor was called to another parishioner's home because the toilet tank was leaking.²⁶

In those days, Korean service businesses, such as electricians or plumbers, were not available. As recently as 20-25 years ago, immigrant pastors were called to do a lot of small things, from fixing toilets to changing light bulbs to picking up a parishioner's family at the airport, on top of their regular ministerial duties. Although the pastors were pressed for time, more often than not those little things built a personal relationship with the parishioners, and, in the long run, helped the church grow.

These are a few of the many examples of what "Church" meant for the immigrants. People felt that they could rely on the Church for anything and everything. But more than anything, the Church was, and still is, a place where people can find comfort, support, and healing from the anxiety and emotional stress caused by the hardships and loneliness of immigrant life.

Immigrant society has matured significantly in the last 30 years. Many ethnic groups have established their own towns named after their ethnicity or identity, such as Koreatown, Chinatown, Little Saigon, Little Tokyo, etc. They can find all the essential

²⁵Chun-Il Cho, The History and Prospects of Korean Immigrant Churches, D. Min. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1984 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1984), 107-8.

²⁶A personal interview with Rev. Sung-Il Chung, a retired pastor of Hanbit Korean Evangelical Church, New York City.

services they need in their own language. The pastors and churches at the present time are pretty much freed from meeting the “small needs” of their immigrant parishioners and can concentrate much more on the spiritual needs of the people. However, the church continues to be involved in the social issues of immigrant society.

First generation immigrants, whether they are early immigrants or came more recently, find the Church to be more than simply a gathering of worshipers, but a place of hope and help. This view is developed from firsthand knowledge, not learned from books and other people’s stories.

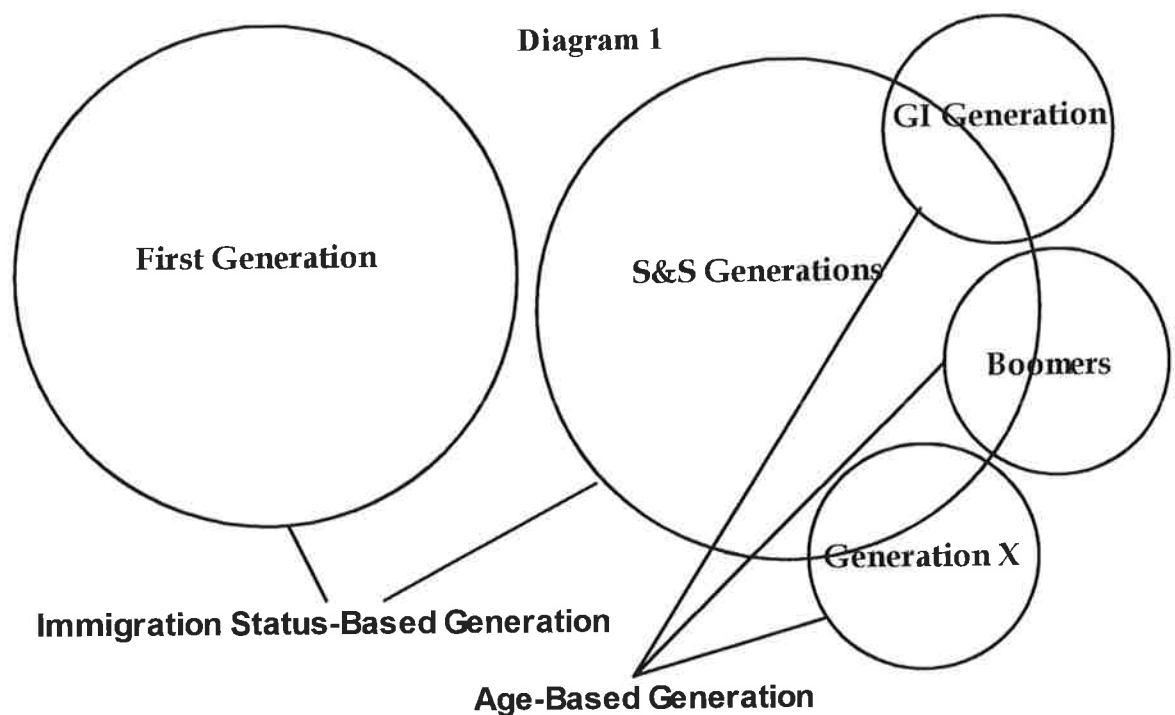
Second and Subsequent Generations

While one can see how the first generation Asian Americans’ view of the Church is clearly drawn from their own experiences, she may not be as confident about the second and subsequent (S&S) generations. Some studies have been done and analyses and conclusions have been drawn about the Asian American churches’ common problem — their ministry involving the S&S generations.²⁷ However, it is still not clear if the later generations have an understanding of the church similar to that of their parents.

Considering that the later generations of Asian-American immigrants speak English like natives, and that the cultural barrier is almost, if not entirely, non-existent for them, it would be safe to assume that their needs would be different from the more survival oriented needs of the first generation. Furthermore, it would be difficult to assume that all S&S generations’ experiences have been similar. Asian American immigrant history is

²⁷Both Nak-In Kim and Kenneth Fong deal with this issue.

now long enough that among the second-generation immigrants we find all different age groups, which is also the case among subsequent generations. This adds even more complexity to the already complex psychosocial dynamics of immigrants. There could be a second-generation immigrant whose age fits into the GI Generation, Boomer Generation, or Generation X, while others fit into a different generation. Diagram 1 demonstrates this complexity.



There could be a generation gap (based on age) within the same immigrant generation (based on immigration status). For example, there could be a serious generation gap within any given S&S generation, which is probably similar to the generation gap in mainline society. This complex generation gap is common to the entire immigrant community regardless of their ethnic background. This generation gap may play an important role as we seek to understand the needs of the immigrant descendants,

and subsequently their understanding of the church. Age-based generation gaps may or may not be intensified by the fact that they are immigrants. Discovering this would require an extensive study on the social and cultural dynamics of the generations involved and how the fact that they are immigrants contributes to their life and worldview.

Although it recognizes the complexity of these issues, the purpose of this study is not to deal with them, but to suggest a new structural model for S&S generation ministry that takes them into account. This study depends on a generalized view of the S&S generation, and therefore runs the risk of oversimplifying a complex issue. However, to fully cover this subject would require much more than a Doctor of Ministry project.

For first generation Asian American Christians, Church has always been at the center of their lives. However, this is not quite true among the American-born Asians. When they were young, most American-born Asians who grew up in Christian families were forced to go to church by their parents and made to sit and endure a worship service they did not understand. It is hard to imagine that this was a joyous experience for them. They were made to sit up straight and participate, or at least pretend to participate, in worship and listen to sermons in a language they did not understand well, if at all. They were forced to sing hymns written in a style that was very different from their taste.

Undoubtedly, they found these worship services boring and irrelevant, if not utterly meaningless. As they grew older and began to possess their own cars, more and more of these American-born Asians strayed away from the Church. In order to prevent this trend, some churches began to provide worship services in English. But still these youngsters did not find it appealing because, more often than not, the service was nothing more than a translation of the first generation worship service. It was not something they could feel

comfortable with, nor was it speaking to them in relevant terms. It did not nurture their soul nor build their faith in Christ. Furthermore, they always felt as if they were second-class citizens.

The older first generation church leaders had very little understanding of the youth and what they go through each day. The young people were looking for answers to their own struggles with identity crises, temptations, and meaning for their lives. They needed guidance and direction. They were struggling with communication and relationship problems with parents and friends but no one was available to guide, nurture, and lead them. They were painfully enduring emotional stress and family instability. In the early days of ethnic churches, the second-generation ministry was nothing more than providing worship services in English and occasional retreats. It had very little to do with counseling, intentional relationship building, discipling, or equipping. This is often the case even now.

These young people have been starving for a meaningful relationship. And they have not been getting it anywhere. The church could not provide it and their home is not any better. Many modern families in the United States are not strangers to divorce and instability, which contributes to loneliness and emotional emptiness in their youngsters.

[T]he traditional family unit – the working father and mother who stays home to care for the two children – has been replaced by a different type of household. In 1960, this stereotypical family type represented 60 percent of all households; today, it reflects just 7 percent of our households. The average American family in 1990 consists of a married couple with one child, in which both parents are employed. At least one of the parents is likely to have been divorced, or will be divorced Presently, one out of four households consists of a single parent with one or more children. The trends indicate that of all the children born in 1990, six out ten will live in a

single parent household for some period of time before they reach the age of 18.²⁸

These statistics strongly communicate the instability of American families.

Although this finding is about American families in general, the Asian immigrant community is not exempt from a similar trend. Furthermore, the loneliness among young people is intensified when immigrant children find themselves facing language and cultural barriers with their own parents.²⁹ Home is not what it used to be — it is no longer a place where they can get support, encouragement, comfort, and a sense of belonging, especially for many Asian Americans.

Traditionally, Asian families are very close-knit, and there is a strong bond between parents and children. However, it is not uncommon to find second-generation immigrants who are not able to adequately communicate with their own parents due to language barriers. Even if the parents speak English, most of them have a different worldview, which makes meaningful conversation very difficult. So the bond between them is not as strong as those in traditional Asian families.

The situation is aggravated further by the fact that most first generation Asian immigrant parents own a small business and work long hours, not just full-time but usually overtime, 12-16 hours a day, six, or in many cases, seven days a week.³⁰ They are hardly available for their children. This unavailability of the parents causes even more stress for

²⁸George Barna, The Frog in the Kettle (Ventura, Calif: Regal Books, 1990), 66-68.

²⁹Nak-In Kim, 54.

³⁰Chang and Diaz-Veizades, 70.

the children and feeds their insecurity. Parents often rely on the Church to provide necessary guidance for their children, which they themselves cannot provide.

Unavailability of parents is not just an immigrant family phenomenon — the average American family experiences a similar trend. George Barna reports that the average American family is moving away from the traditional family lifestyle where family members spend time together and share meals together. The family unit is losing its grip on unity and oneness.

We spend less time together than previously. Meals are less likely to be eaten at home as a shared family experience. Vacations are shorter and less likely to include all members of the household. The average home now has multiple television sets, enabling children and adults to watch different programming in separate rooms Children who live with their parents report that they spend less than 30 minutes per week in meaningful conversation with their mothers, and less than 15 minutes per week in meaningful conversation with their fathers.³¹

With this kind of trend, it would be hard for anyone to expect the family to be the primary source of one's stability, support, encouragement, and hope. This trend only feeds the instability of young people's emotional states. Although this is the current trend of the average American family, immigrant families are not very different. This is a major concern for Asian American parents. However, there is not much they can do. They often console themselves with the thought that everyone is in the same boat.

One result of the changing nature of the family relationship is that people, particularly young men and women, are seeking emotional gratification from sources outside their home. More and more Americans desperately desire close friendships. This

³¹Barna, 70.

is equally true for Asian immigrant young people. As Asian American families start to lose tight cohesiveness, the young people are starting to search for social acceptance and emotional gratification elsewhere. Sadly, the desire for strong friendship far exceeds its existence in today's America and particularly in immigrant society. Many people feel they do not have close friends.

This indicates an important role the Church needs to play. The church needs to be a place where these people find acceptance, a sense of belonging, and friendship. However, the Asian American churches have not been able to fill this emptiness nor help its young people cope with loneliness and isolation. For the most part, the Church has not been a major source of their strength and hope. This is not due to intentional neglect or insensitivity on the Church's part, rather it is simply due to a lack of quality leadership in the Asian American church who can effectively minister to its young constituents in the English language. These churches either have not been able to provide, or inadequately provide, English-speaking persons who not only understand American culture, but are able to minister to young people in this cultural setting.

Furthermore, even when an Asian American church provides an English language ministry, in most cases it operates under the first generation dominant structure. It does not have autonomy. This introduces another set of concerns in Asian American churches. Most of those who minister to the English-speaking group feel that they are not able to make their own decisions and lead the ministry in the direction they feel is appropriate, causing many of them to turn away from Asian American Churches. This results in insufficient leadership for an English ministry, often forcing the church to do away with such a ministry completely. As a result, many young Asian Americans who grew up in a

church feel neglected and turn away, while many who did not are not looking to the Church as a source of emotional and/or spiritual gratification.

Another reason why the S&S generations are not engaging in ministry is that most Asian American churches lack social consciousness and focus only on self-serving activities. When a church is removed from social and political concerns, it loses its power and meaning.

Summary

The church is called out by God to be part of His covenant and to spread that covenant to the farthest corners of the world. This is the Biblical meaning of the word “Church,” derived from the Greek *ekklesia* as its definition developed throughout the time period of the New Testament. Further, all local churches everywhere do not make up the Church. Rather, each local church is to be “the Church” — a part of the whole and the whole itself at the same time.

The place of the Church in the lives of Asian Americans has changed along with society as a whole, and is different from generation to generation. First generation immigrants have a different view of the church than those of the second and subsequent generations, and, in fact, early first generation immigrants’ views differed from those of later first generation immigrants. Early first generation immigrants were discriminated against to the point that they could not find medical help and their children were not permitted in English-speaking schools. So to them, the church was not only a place where their spiritual and social needs could be met, but as a place where their subsistence needs could be met. As society’s discrimination lessened, later first generation immigrants began

to have less subsistence-type needs, but they still rely on the church to make their transition to life in the U.S. smoother. In fact, many Asian Americans join and even support a church even though they are not Christians.

The views of the second and subsequent generations of Asian Americans toward the Church are often unclear. Many of them have turned away from church completely; most of those who have not have moved to a different church than the one their parents went to. This is primarily due to the lack of quality, later-generation-oriented English language ministries in Asian American churches. Several of these churches have attempted such a ministry, but many of them have struggled due to a severe shortage of qualified leaders who are willing to work within the boundaries imposed by the first generation ministry.

CHAPTER 3

A Theological Basis for Multi-Ethnic Ministry

Introduction

This chapter briefly investigates a theological basis for multi-ethnic ministry. It first examines the social and cultural context of multi-ethnic ministry, arguing that the increasing amount of multi-culturalism in the United States, particularly in Southern California, necessitates such a ministry. It then discusses the importance of mission commonality vs. homogeneity in multi-ethnic ministry. The chapter goes on to explore some existing definitions of multi-ethnic ministry, which will be taken into consideration later in this study as Asian-American churches are examined more closely. This chapter concludes with an overview of a Biblical basis for multi-ethnic ministry.

Social and Cultural Context of Multi-Ethnic Ministry

In defining the social and cultural context of a ministry, one must consider who moves into and who moves out of the area, people in its context, and the way they relate to each other. In the United States, particularly in Southern California, cultural and ethnic diversity is not unusual. According to the U.S. Census, Hispanics and Asians make up the majority of those who came to the United States between 1985 and 1990. Forty-three percent of all immigrants during this period of time were Hispanics and 29 percent were

Asians.¹ Quite literally, the world is coming to the United States, and not for a visit, either — they are moving in. This indicates that we need to think of our mission differently.

While the Church should not neglect foreign mission abroad, it should also recognize the need for a “foreign mission” here at home. As the world is coming to America, this foreign mission at home will increasingly require our attention. Such massive immigration continues to pluralize our society with its racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Although, for the most part, each ethnic group preserves most of their cultural identity, some parts are creatively mixed.

When one Korean church in Irvine, California had its all-church picnic, young children were blindfolded and given a stick to hit a candy packed piñata. When the piñata was broken, all the children enjoyed the candies. They were Korean children playing a Mexican game at a church function. Another example is a Chinese congregation celebrating a Quinceañera for one of the church members’ daughter whose mother is Mexican. Such a multi-ethnic community calls for a multi-ethnic ministry.

Cultural or Ethnic Homogeneity vs. Mission Commonality

Obviously, the easiest possible way for a person to become a Christian is within his own cultural and ethnic boundaries. In his book Understanding Church Growth, Donald McGavran rightly points out that “English-speaking Americans are not likely to become

¹Ortiz, 33

Christians in Spanish- speaking or Japanese-speaking congregations. When they become Christians it will be in English-speaking churches.”²

McGavran calls this phenomenon a “homogeneous principle.” A “homogeneous unit” can be defined much more narrowly than just by language or ethnicity. McGavran paraphrases Lyle C. Schaller’s definition of “homogeneous unit,” essentially stating that within any larger “homogeneous whole” (which is itself a homogeneous unit) there is any number of progressively smaller homogeneous units.³

For example, a church’s youth group has junior high students (one homogeneous unit) and senior high students (another homogeneous unit). These groups can be broken up into smaller homogeneous units based on grade level, gender, and so on. Each of these progressively smaller homogeneous units, combined with others, makes up a larger homogeneous whole (the youth group), just as the youth group combines with other similarly constructed homogeneous units to make up a church congregation.

As can be seen from the definition and example, one can define a homogeneous unit as narrowly as necessary for his own discussion. However, for our purposes, we will need a fairly broad definition of the term. Cornerstone United Methodist Church (UMC), an English-speaking Asian American church in Fullerton, California, will serve as an excellent example for our purposes. We will discuss its homogeneity in terms of ethnicity and language. Ethnically, the congregation is predominantly Chinese, with a few other

²McGavran, 227, paraphrasing Lyle C. Schaller, work unknown.

³McGavran, 226.

ethnic groups represented. Regardless of their ethnicity, everyone in the congregation speaks English.

So if we define “homogeneous group” based on language, one may say that Cornerstone is a homogeneous group. However, if we define it based on ethnicity, it is certainly a heterogeneous group. One may say “They are all Asians, so they must be very much alike.” Yes, they are all Asians and they look alike, but their worldviews, ways of building relationships, and ways of handling various issues could be as different as night and day.

When one defines “homogeneous group” in terms of language, an immigrant family may not be a homogeneous group, even though the family is considered the smallest unit of society. Children speak fluent or nearly fluent English, and in many cases, English is their only language, while their parents speak very limited English. Consequently, their communication often suffers. The children’s worldview, values, ways of living, and allegiances may well be very different from those of their parents.

People at Cornerstone came together for one purpose — to worship the Lord in English. Their ways of living or values could be very different, but they came together for at least two common things: spoken language and racial identity. It is not one or the other, it must be both. It wasn’t just the language — they could have joined any other English-speaking congregation, but they did not. There must be something equally, or even more, important than just the language. It could be the looks, the apparent likeness. It could be the “Eastern” culture and worldview, although they are vastly different from ethnicity to ethnicity. It could be worship style. Whatever it may be, it brought them

together, and they will continue to stay together for the same reason they came to Cornerstone to begin with.

We do not need to assume that they stay together only because English is the language they speak. Language certainly helps, but once they build a relationship with each other, the ethnic, cultural, worldview, or whatever differences they may have become very insignificant. In some cases, people may speak a different language at home and have limited English, yet they find enough similarity to stay together and feel comfortable with each other.

The issue is how to build a cohesive relationship early. When people do not know each other, the relationship can easily be broken. If they have known each other for a while, then it is easier for them to stay together in spite of a few differences. McGavran cites the results of Lyle C. Schaller's survey regarding why people joined the church:

3 – 8%	walked in on their own initiative
4 – 10%	came because they liked the program
10 – 20%	joined because they liked the pastor
10 – 25%	joined in response to visitation evangelism
3 – 6%	came because of the Sunday School
60 – 90%	were brought by some friend or relative ⁴

It is quite obvious from these results that when people know someone in a church, it is much easier for them to stay at that church.

But when people speak different languages, have different cultural backgrounds, and do not have any relationship with each other, it is much more difficult for them to

⁴Ibid., 225.

come together, let alone stay together. This is especially so when there is ample opportunity to gather in their own linguistic and cultural groups.

So one must ask why multi-ethnic and multi-cultural ministry is helpful or even necessary. As will be seen, the Asian American community is going through a phase in which the English-speaking population is expanding although the first generation remains the majority. If society at large is going through this phenomenon, there is no question the Church, as a part of the society, must be going through it also.

If a church has a mission and vision for Asian American communities, it is not just for one particular ethnicity, but also for all people of Asian descent regardless of linguistic or cultural background. While a church recognizes the need for the ease and comfort of staying within its own cultural and linguistic setting, it must also realize that obdurately doing so would not be suitable for its own mission and vision. Edward Judson once said, "Success and suffering are vitally and organically linked. If you succeed without suffering, it is because someone else suffered before you; if you suffer without succeeding, it is that someone else may succeed after you."⁵ Realizing one's vision requires taking a major step out of one's comfort zone. Often it involves suffering, but because of that suffering, the accomplishment is valued and treasured that much more.

The Church is no different — in order to make its vision come true and accomplish its mission, it must step out of its comfort zone. A church that seeks to reach out to and serve Asian Americans must be willing to take a risk and courageously step out of its comfortable nest. It is not always easy, but the mission and vision of the Church have

⁵Quoted in Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations (Rockville, Md.: Assurance Publishers, 1979), 1372.

never been easy. Christ called his disciples to follow him, and He went to Calvary. He did not promise an easy task — in fact, He asked us to bear our own crosses and follow him (Matt. 16:24). The Church must learn to do that if it is to succeed in accomplishing its mission.

One thing we must realize is that we are not doing this by ourselves — if this is what the Lord wants us to do, he will also provide the necessary ability and resources to accomplish it. Christ promised, “Lo, I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). There is nothing mightier than Christ’s presence and power; since He is with us, “all things are possible” (Phil. 4:13).

Accomplishing a vision to reach out to and serve Asian Americans requires a creative approach involving at least five steps. First, the church should identify what the felt needs are among the Asian American churches and communities, which must be something common to all Asian Americans. McGavran’s homogeneous principle applies much less here than in other settings, since the very term “Asian American” escapes the narrow definition of homogeneity. Mission commonality is more important than homogeneity among Asian American churches.

Second, the church needs to consider resident resources that it may be able to utilize in meeting these felt needs. In doing so, it is important to consider all resources already existing within the local church, and to realize that this process may take some time.

Third, the church needs to discover different ways to meet the felt needs of the community. In meeting these challenges, the church must calculate the costs and

possibilities involved in each possible method. Among the many possible solutions, it must choose those with the least liability and the greatest possibility.

Fourth, the church needs to take a definite step toward satisfying those needs. It is seemingly needless to mention, but one must realize that dreaming or visioning may not actually lead to action. Dreaming is good. Visioning is necessary. However, dreaming and visioning without action is nothing but daydreaming, leading nowhere. Visioning is the blueprint, but action is what builds the future.

Fifth, the church must endure until it sees the fruits of its labor. Life is a succession of waiting periods. A child must wait until he is old enough to have a bicycle, a young man until he is old enough to drive a car, a college student until he has a diploma. Life is full of waiting and periods of endurance. No one accomplishes any great thing without endurance. The Church is no different. Zig Ziglar in his book, See You at the Top, shares the story of a great French painter, Pierre Auguste Renoir.

In his old age, Renoir suffered from arthritis, which twisted and cramped his hand. Henri Matisse, his artist friend, watched sadly while Renoir, grasping a brush with only his fingertips, continued to paint, even though each movement caused stabbing pain. One day, Matisse asked Renoir why he persisted in painting at the expense of such torture. Renoir replied, 'The pain passes, but the beauty remains.'⁶

The vision will be realized in due time with the support of resilient endurance.

⁶Zig Ziglar, See You at the Top (Gretna Pelican Publishing, 1977), 308.

Existing Definitions of Multi-Ethnic Ministry

There are several working definitions that help demonstrate the necessity of multi-ethnic ministries in a social and cultural context such as that of the United States, and particularly of Southern California.

Paul Hiebert defines multi-ethnic ministry as “a church in which there is an attitude and practice of accepting people of all ethnic, class, and national origin as equal and fully participating members and ministers in the fellowship of the church.” ⁷

Roger Greenway characterizes a multi-ethnic congregation as one that “blends distinctive elements of various ethnic traditions in such a way that no single tradition predominates or suppresses the others. Nor is the outcome such an osterized mixture that nobody can tell one element from another.” ⁸

Hoover Wong elucidates it as a church that combines “two distinct monocultural, monolingual groups interacting as one congregation with an agreed, common third culture and language. This is not to be confused with two distinct cultures meeting side by side on one property, sharing facilities, maintaining a parallel society and ministry.” ⁹

⁷See Ortiz, 149.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

Robert Lupton classifies it as “one that intentionally recruits and embraces diversity and works out structures that assure diversity to continue within the congregation.”¹⁰

Among available definitions of the multi-ethnic ministry, the one Ortiz provides gives a helpful foundation to those who seek to develop such a model. He defines it to be

[A] church that has taken on the challenge of biblical justice and missions in the context of racial strife and increased pluralism. It builds a relationship between the different language groups, intent on bringing biblical reconciliation between them. This display of the kingdom of God motivates multi-language congregations to come together and to restructure the present monocultural formation of the church into one that is based on obedience to the Word of God.¹¹

Ortiz alludes that multi-ethnic ministry is not just a response to a contextual need but also a biblical mandate.

A Biblical Basis for Multi-Ethnic Ministry

From a biblical perspective, one realizes that multi-ethnic ministry is God’s invention from the beginning. In Genesis 11 one reads the story of the Babel tower in which the Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they purpose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the earth...” (vs. 6-8). The Lord himself was the author of multi-

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., 66

language and multi-ethnicity, and it was the Lord himself who would bless all humanity through faith (Gen. 12:1-3).

There is a great amount of evidence that God calls people from every part of the earth. “Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts . . . Many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord...” (Zech. 8:20-22). But at the beginning of its history, the church, which was born out of Judaism, has resisted the multi-ethnic ministry. It took Roman soldier Cornelius’ conversion to remind the church that “God has granted even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life” (Acts 11:18).

Later, the membership of the early church was composed of people from different places and backgrounds. In his book Reconciliation, Curtiss DeYoung gives an account of the leadership of the early church in Antioch.

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul. Simeon and Lucius were from Africa, Barnabas and Saul were Jews, and Manaen may have been a European. Although such a leadership team is highly unusual in our day, the reader of Acts is given no special notice that this was an experiment in reconciliation. The normative nature of such ministry is also confirmed by what is not stated in the New Testament. For example, the three most important leaders in the formation of the Corinthian church in Europe were Peter, Paul, and Apollos. Peter was from Palestine, Paul was born in Asia, and Apollos was born in Africa, but the fact that a Palestinian Jew, an Asian, and an African provided leadership in this European church was never mentioned.¹²

¹²Curtiss DeYoung, Reconciliation (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1997), 57.

Perhaps in the early church, which was heavily influenced by Hellenistic culture, the language barrier was not an issue — everyone spoke Greek. But this is not the case in today's America. There are many recent immigrants who do not speak English well enough to carry on a conversation, let alone worship and be deeply touched by spiritual inspiration.

As discussed in the previous section, McGavran makes his case for a homogeneous unit principle around this issue. He rightly asserts that people like to stay within their own racial, cultural, or linguistic comfort zone.

Men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers. This principle states an undeniable fact. Human beings do build barriers around their own societies. More exactly we may say that the ways in which each society lives and speaks, dresses and works, of necessity set it off from other societies. Mankind is a mosaic and each piece has a separate life of its own which seems strange and often unlovely to men and women of other pieces.¹³

It comes as no surprise that no one wants to cross any barrier if he has a choice. The easiest possible way for a person to become a Christian is within his own cultural boundaries. But how shall we define cultural boundaries for Asian Americans? For the first generation immigrants, it would obviously be their own ethnic group regardless of their ethnicity. But how about the S&S generations? Would they still keep their cultural and ethnic identity and operate with the same cultural values and worldview that their parents or grandparents operate with? Even if they would, their cultural identity, values and worldview would be Americanized.

¹³Donald McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1980), 223.

Some refer to multi-ethnicity as a rainbow, whose beauty is found in each color's distinctiveness. When red remains red while orange, yellow, and all the other colors stay the same, the rainbow appears to be beautiful. But in this rainbow, there is fuzziness that comes from two colors merging. As we move away from the merging area of the two colors, we begin to notice the distinctiveness of each color. When more than one culture comes together there is a certain amount of fuzziness — an American version of cultural identity, values and worldview. But this fuzziness and ambiguity is not a weakness, but a strength that provides a foundation for a creative ministry.

Summary

Immigration into the United States, particularly into Southern California, continues to create a culturally and ethnically diverse society. In such a society, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual ministry is needed. A multi-ethnic and multi-lingual ministry integrates various ethnic groups into one cohesive church while allowing each group to maintain their own cultural identity. This ministry must focus on Biblical reconciliation in order to be effective. God introduced multilingualism at the tower of Babel, and with multiple languages came multiple ethnic groups and multiple cultures. Jesus introduced the concept of multi-ethnic ministry, and that principle was followed by early Church leaders. Therefore, there is no question that multi-ethnic ministry is a Biblical model, and completely appropriate in today's diversified society.

CHAPTER 4

Present Picture of Asian American Churches

Introduction

The challenges Asian American churches face are complex in their nature and diverse in their type. In this chapter, we will examine some of the common characteristics and issues of Asian American churches.

Characteristics of Asian American Churches

It is generally known that different churches attract different classes of people based on educational or socioeconomic status. This is particularly true for Asian American churches. Since the majority of Asian American churches are small, with an average attendance of less than 150, the close-knit nature of these congregations is more evident than in churches in general.¹

A general overview of Asian American churches would be helpful for our discussion regarding the challenges they face. First, most Asian American churches are monolingual congregations, although some use more than one language besides English. In some Chinese churches three languages — Mandarin, Cantonese, and Taiwanese — are used to minister to their people. Although these are technically dialects of the Chinese language, they are so different from one another that they can be considered different

Shim, Steve Sangkwon, A Clinical Study of "Haan" Experiences among Korean Immigrants in Southern California, Claremont, CA: Claremont School of Theology, 1990 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1990), 276.

PhD diss.,

languages. Asian American churches are deeply rooted in their respective cultural heritages, which their languages represent.

Second, Asian American congregations experience cross-cultural dynamics within each individual church. Although most of these congregations are a combination of first generation, transgeneration, and S&S generation immigrants, their ministries have been primarily focused on the first generation. As a result, the transgeneration and the S&S generation ministries have been largely neglected, chiefly due to the lack of quality leaders who can minister to them in English in a bi-cultural setting. There has been an intentional effort to change this situation and provide meaningful ministries for transgeneration and S&S generation immigrants; however, this is still a major area of concern for all Asian American churches.

Third, the ministry of Asian American churches mostly centers on their pastors; consequently, the relationship between the pastor and the members is one of the most important factors in ministry. Even in evangelism and church growth the pastor's appearance and his relationship with others is very important. When the senior pastor moves to another church, it is often the case that many people end up leaving the church to either follow the pastor or to join another church, unless the new pastor's personal appeal is exceptional.

Fourth, Asian American churches are mostly small and close-knit. The members are usually a part of a large network in which they bring their extended families, close friends, and co-workers into church membership. This network is intertwined with other networks and creates a complex, yet close-knit, community. This closeness is helpful for cohesiveness, but could cause complications when there is conflict. If a pastor has a

conflict with a parishioner, it often permeates the entire family, and even the entire network. So, if a member leaves a church because of conflict, often their whole family or even their whole network leaves with them, which is frequently a large chunk of the membership.

Fifth, most Asian American churches do not possess their own facility. Most of them are small and cannot afford to purchase a building. Either they rent space in an office complex, school, or other church, or they share a facility (nest) with a hosting congregation. The former is a renting situation, and usually no different from any secular rental agreement. The latter is a shared facility situation, which is similar to renting in terms of building usage, but instead of paying rent, the nesting church shares the maintenance costs. Usually the latter is much more desirable for the nesting congregation for financial reasons. Most Asian American churches, whether in renting or shared facility situations, experience limitations in building usage. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The sixth characteristic of Asian American churches is that they seek to meet a wide range of immigrants' needs. Immigrant churchgoers hope that their churches will provide: (1) religious training and a dynamic worship experience, (2) fellowship with people of their own ethnic background, (3) various information, (4) education — not just religious but also social and even academic (for example, Korean, Chinese, and English language classes, citizenship preparation classes, etc.), (5) counseling, and (6) financial help if needed.

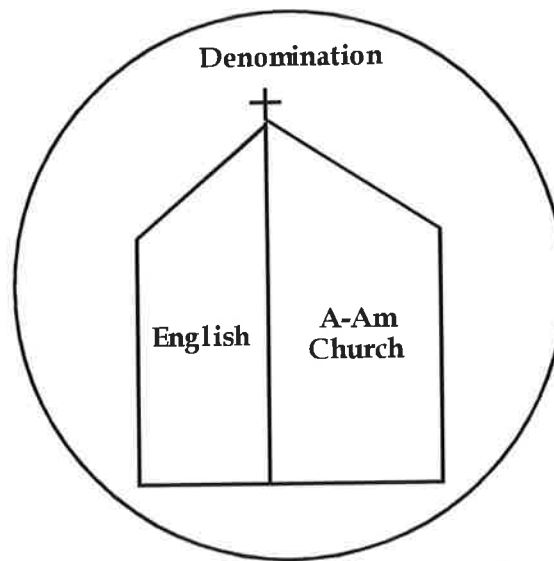
Seventh, in spite of the lack of their own facilities, Asian American churches put a heavy emphasis on programs and activities. While Sunday worship is their main focus,

they also provide various weekday programs: Wednesday Evening Service, Friday regional small group Bible study, Saturday Youth Activities, etc. Another important activity in Asian American churches is fellowship hour after the Sunday worship service. They usually have coffee, doughnuts and other snacks, or in some cases, lunch, every Sunday.

Finally, Asian American churches are assimilated into mainline denominations to some degree. There are basically five degrees of assimilation, ranging from completely immersed to no participation at all. This is discussed in detail in the following section.

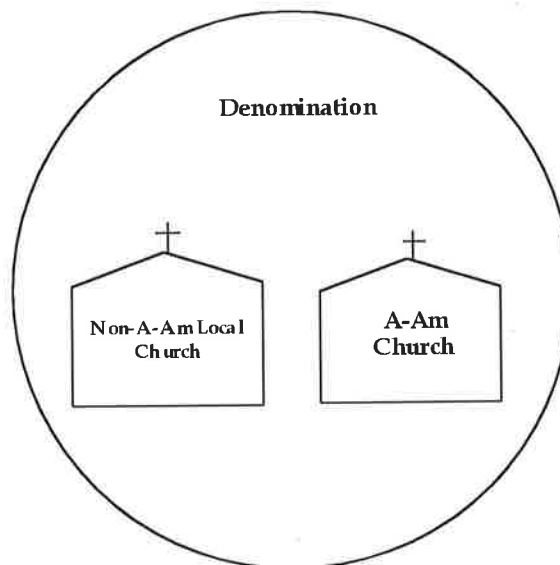
Degrees of Assimilation into Mainline Denominations

Some Asian American churches are totally immersed not only into a denomination but also into a specific local church within that denomination. For example, Vietnamese Methodist Church of Riverside has joined Grace United Methodist Church of Riverside, which was an English-speaking Caucasian congregation, and is now an integral part of the whole church while maintaining its own language ministry. The English-speaking congregation sees the Vietnamese ministry as its own mission and a part of their own church. Diagram 2 shows what this looks like.

Diagram 2

In this case, the Asian American church can secure a place of worship and receive denominational assistance. However, the downside is that the Asian American church is not only forced to follow the hosting church's policy but also its denomination's policy.

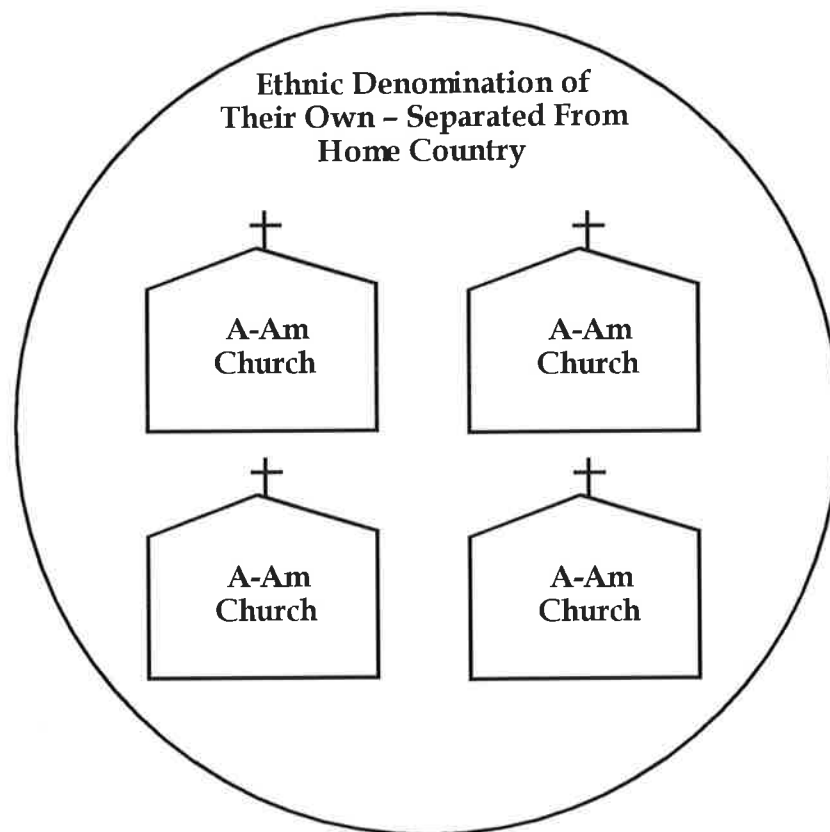
The second and most common degree of assimilation is an Asian American church joining a particular denomination but remaining a separate church, as depicted in Diagram 3.

Diagram 3

In this situation, a local Asian American church is strongly suggested to follow the beliefs, rules, and regulations of the denomination it joined. However, it still enjoys a great deal of freedom in establishing its local church policy. Most Asian American churches have their own traditions in running church business and this arrangement allows them to keep most of them. At the same time, the Asian American churches can have the benefit of denominational support. One downside to this arrangement is that Asian American churches still face the challenge of finding a church facility for their ministries.

The third degree of assimilation is where Asian American churches of a particular ethnicity gather together to form a new denomination, as shown in Diagram 4.

Diagram 4

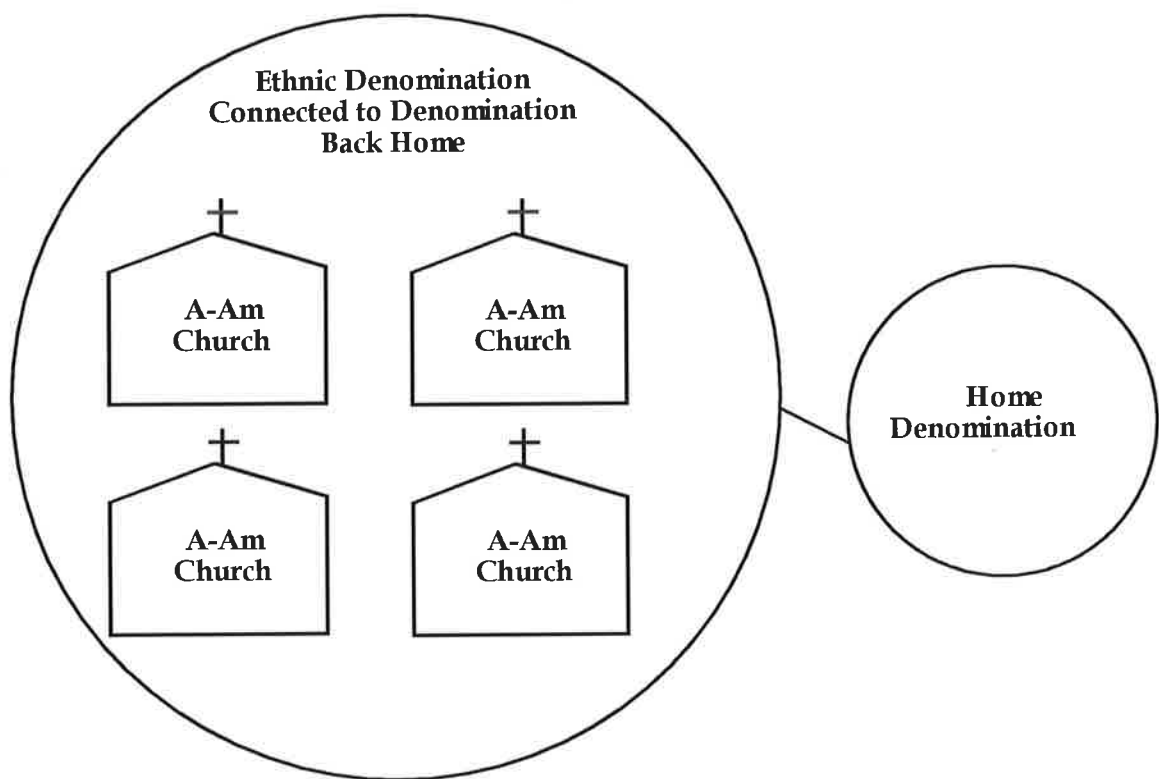


The benefit of this is that the churches in this category can maintain their cultural and denominational heritage, with almost no cultural barriers, in church life. The clergy and members of these churches have a very close relationship with each other. However, these churches would face difficulty in renting a facility, and would not be able to receive much denominational support other than spiritual and moral.

The fourth degree is joining the denomination of their home country. Their intent is to maintain their traditional ministry practices and beliefs in the immigrant churches.

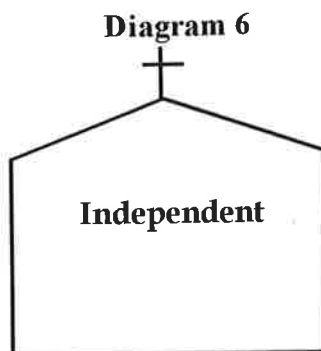
Diagram 5 shows this model.

Diagram 5



The churches in this setting can receive some denominational support, but not very much.

The last degree of assimilation is a church that has no denominational affiliation, shown in Diagram 6.



This is an independent congregation whose administration and ministries are solely in the hands of the church leaders.²

Common Issues of Asian American Churches

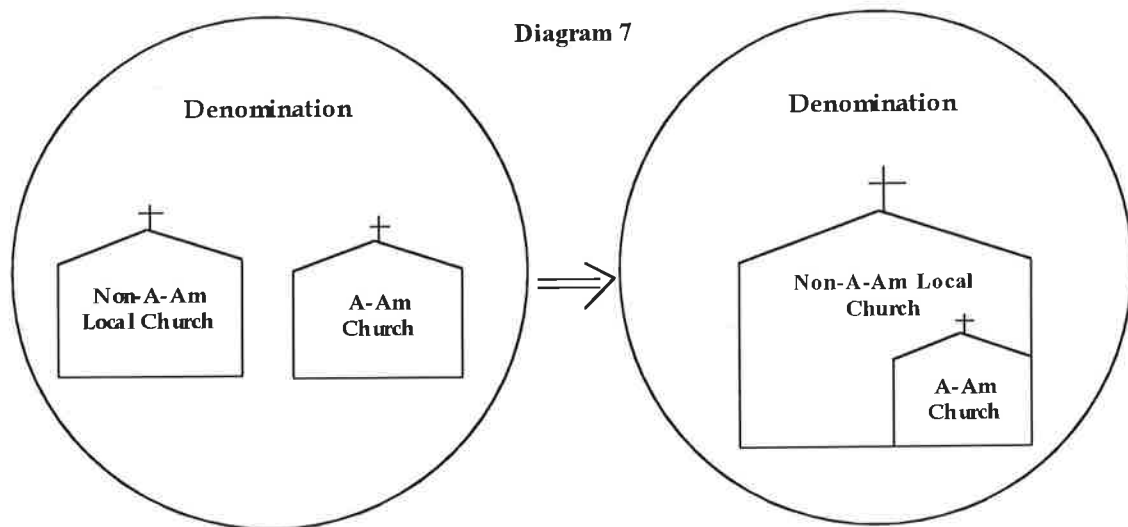
Among the many issues Asian American churches face, the two biggest concerns of nearly all of them are meeting their space and facilities requirements and an English language ministry for the second and subsequent generations.

Space and Facilities

High real estate costs, small congregations, and limited financial strengths force most Asian American churches into a shared facility relationship. Sharing a facility often puts a lot of stress on all the churches involved, but particularly on the nesting congregation. Everyone is fighting for the same limited space, which can quickly create

conflict. Often the hosting congregation limits the facilities the nesting congregation can use and the hours they can use them. This affects the nesting congregation's programs, activities, and potential for growth.

Types of Shared Facility Relationships. There are several types of shared facility relationships. One, the Asian American church joins a hosting congregation as a part of its ministry, a situation depicted in Diagram 7. This relationship occurs for two reasons. The first, most common, reason is that the Asian American church needs a place of worship and ministry. The second, less common, reason is that the Asian American church finds the hosting congregation's ministry and vision attractive, and wants to be a part of that ministry.

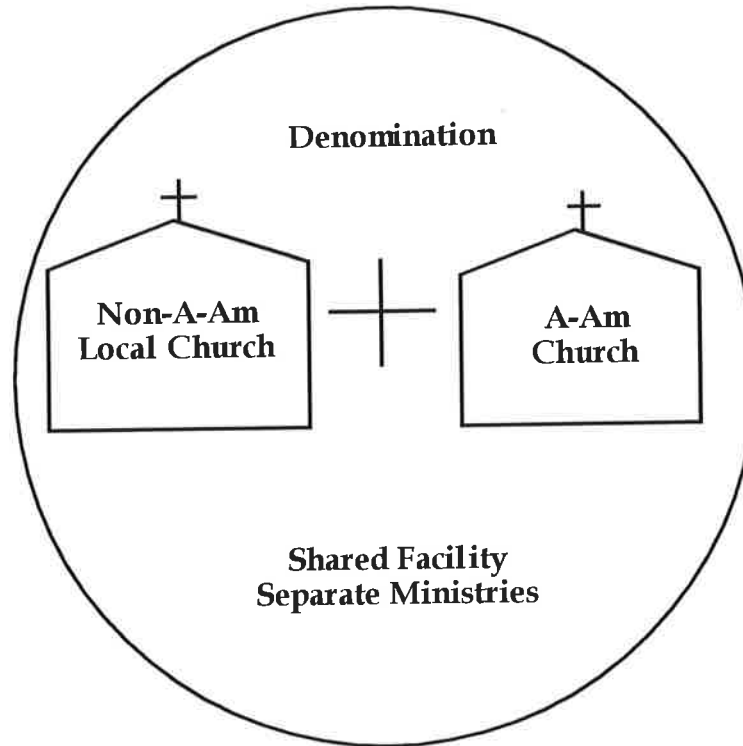


Often shared facility relationships happen for the perceived benefits to both congregations involved. When the hosting congregation is older, with mostly retired people, and does not have the financial strength to maintain the facility by itself, it needs to

²These eight characteristics of Asian American churches are modified from Shim's discussion of Korean American churches, 277-84.

depend on someone else to maintain and manage it. This is also very common when the hosting congregation is declining or stagnant with very little energy and hope. It feels it needs someone to get it out from under the burden of maintaining the facility. Therefore, having a growing Asian American church as part of their ministry, taking care of the facility and paying the bills for them, would be very desirable for the hosting congregation. At the same time, it is good for the Asian American church because it means they secure a place of worship and ministry. This further implies that there is a possibility of taking over the facility without purchasing it. The Asian American church's only duty would be maintaining the facility without the obligation of mortgage payments, which they would have to assume were they to purchase a facility. Thus, this arrangement could be good for both congregations.

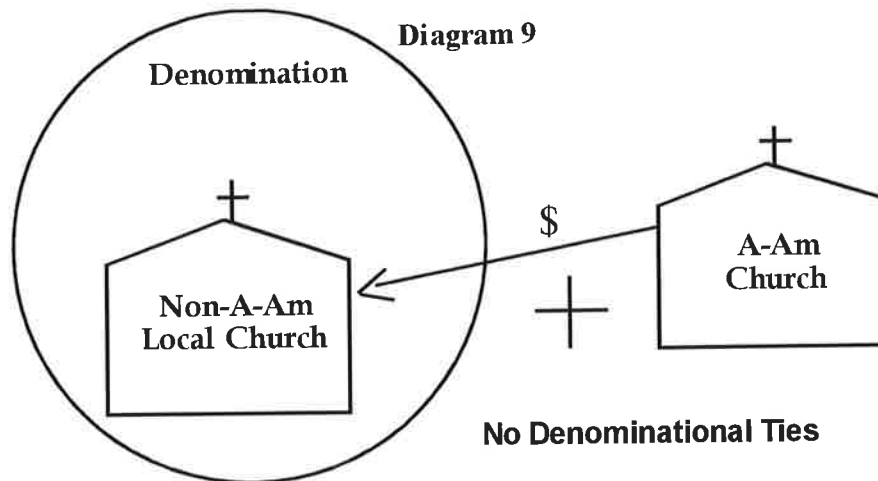
However, the situation could be different in other cases. The second type of shared facility involves two churches of the same denomination with separate church identities: the hosting congregation, which is fairly strong but has difficulty maintaining the facility by itself, and the nesting congregation, which is an Asian American church that is willing to share the maintenance cost but wants to keep their ministry separate. The Asian American church is invited to be in a shared facility relationship with the understanding that it would generate enough extra income for the hosting church to maintain the facility. Diagram 8 shows this relationship.

Diagram 8

In this case, the hosting congregation is receiving an Asian American church into their facility only for extra income, and does not view the nesting congregation as part of their mission or ministry. Therefore, the hosting congregation tends to be very protective of its facility, often severely limiting the nesting congregation's ability to use the facility. As the nesting congregation tries to increase its facility usage, the hosting congregation begins to fear that their facility is being taken over, and imposes more controls and restrictions on building usage, creating a vicious cycle. The end result is increased frustration on the part of the Asian American church and increased fear on the part of the hosting congregation, which often results in painful conflicts.

The third type of shared facility relationship is renting. This is no different from any secular renting relationship. The tenant ("nesting" congregation) pays a certain

amount of rent and uses the designated facility within the designated time. There is no shared maintenance cost for the Asian American church other than the rent. The maintenance would be strictly the owner's responsibility. In this case, the monthly rent is usually very high. This relationship is most likely to happen between two churches of different denominations. Diagram 9 illustrates this situation.



Because this relationship does not involve a denominational tie, there is no security in renting the space. The Asian American church's worship space is secured only while the lease lasts. When the lease expires, there is no guarantee that they will continue to be able to use the facility for their ministry.

Mission and outreach create the fourth type of shared facility relationship. When an existing congregation reaches out to the people of another ethnic background with the intention to evangelize them and start a new congregation as a result of their evangelism, this relationship is not just shared facility but shared ministry.

Second and Subsequent Generation Ministry

The second and subsequent generation ministries face all the same challenges as any other Asian American ministry. However, they also have a whole set of problems and challenges that is unique to them.

As mentioned previously, S&S generation ministry is a major concern for Asian American churches because many of them do not have a strong English language ministry. However, the problem is not that these churches do not recognize the need to have such a ministry, but rather a severe shortage of leaders for these ministries. Most Asian American churches are looking for English-speaking ministers, preferably bilingual, either clergy or laity, but finding such a leader is a challenge.

Generally, Asian American churches look for these ministers within their own ethnic groups because they prefer a bilingual person to facilitate bridging the gap between the first and S&S generations. At the present time, most S&S generation ministry is part of the dominant ethnic language congregation. The first generation ministers and church members feel they need to have smooth communication with the leaders of the S&S generation ministry, and they want these English-speaking leaders to make a bridge between the first and the S&S generation groups. The saddest phenomenon is that when they find an English-speaking clergy or seminary student who can lead an S&S generation ministry, the first generation ministers often try to control or dominate them. As a result, the English-speaking ministers end up leaving these ministries and going elsewhere. Just as an example, there about 150-170 Korean American clergy serving non-Korean English-speaking ministries nationwide in the United Methodist Church, most of whom are

bilingual.³ At the same time, almost all Korean American churches search for ministers with bilingual skills to serve their children.

There could be many reasons as to why these Korean American clergy do not serve Korean American churches, where they are really needed. However, three major reasons stand out. First, they do not want to be treated worse than they deserve. Often these ministers are young, and many of them are female. In many Asian cultures, age is very important. Further, in many ways, Asian American churches are very reactionary and female clergy are not welcomed with opened arms. These young ministers, both male and female, often possess treasured gifts and graces, but they are neither appreciated nor given an opportunity to fully utilize them. Most of the time they are controlled and dominated by the first generation senior pastors so that their gifts and graces are choked instead of allowed to bloom and blossom. As a result, they stay away from Asian American churches.

Second, most Asian American churches have a strong cultural heritage and tradition, not just in a broad sense, but also in day-to-day administration and human relationships. While many English-speaking transgeneration ministers are bilingual, they are not fully bi-cultural. They understand both languages and are familiar with both cultures, but they feel neither culture is truly their own. It is like clothes that do not quite fit. However, the first generation ministers and members expect them to operate and behave just like them because they speak the language and understand the culture. In

³The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church provided this fact at a meeting of the Association of Korean-American Clergy Serving Cross-Cultural Appointments, Chicago, 1998.

reality, many of these transgeneration ministers are very different from the first generation in their worldview and mindset. As a result, they experience tremendous stress and unnecessary conflicts with the first generation.

In the case of ministers who do English ministry within Asian American churches and are S&S generation, monocultural, and speak only English, they would be isolated from the first generation and would not be able to communicate very well with the senior pastor who has a different cultural background and whose comfortable language is not English.

Third, these ministers are compensated much less than they normally would be at churches of a different ethnic background. This is because most Asian American churches are small and cannot fully support all the staff. So they end up supporting the senior pastor first and compensate other staff second, usually much less.

In most cases, the financial reason is not the determining factor for these ministers to leave Asian American churches. But when combined with the other two, more serious, reasons, the financial disadvantage makes it even more difficult for them to stay within their own ethnic churches.

Apart from the lack of leaders, the English language ministries within Asian American churches face another challenge. Often, these ministries experience a lack of autonomy. Although they have their own ministry, they are often controlled by the first generation ministry and treated like second-class citizens. They may make decisions but their decisions have to be approved by the first generation ministry. Such a lack of autonomy negatively affects the S&S generation ministry. Because of these factors,

English and S&S generation ministries still remain the greatest challenge for the Asian American churches.

Summary

Asian American churches have many common features: they tend to be monolingual, small, focused on their first generation members and the pastor, and in a shared facility situation. Also, they usually do not have an effective ministry for the second and subsequent generations.

Usually, this lack of an effective later-generation ministry is due to a shortage of qualified, willing leaders. The leaders of the first generation ministry typically do not allow an English ministry much autonomy, if any. They want to control every aspect, and refuse to recognize the qualifications of its leaders. In addition, these churches often cannot afford to pay these leaders very much, so given all the other obstacles, most qualified young Asian American ministers stay away from this type of situation.

The majority of Asian American churches share their facility with another church. Often they rent the facility from a host congregation and experience high rent and a great deal of difficulty using the space as they need to. Other churches, instead of paying rent, move into the facility of another church within their denomination and pay only for maintenance. This situation also involves a great deal of stress and difficulty for them, as the host congregation tends to view them as a threat and imposes rigid restrictions on facility usage. Occasionally, an Asian American church will share a facility as a part of the host church's ministry. This happens when an Asian American congregation joins a host church, or when a "parent church" starts a language ministry as a form of mission

outreach. In the following chapter, we will examine a viable method an English language ministry can use to start a new ethnic language ministry.

CHAPTER 5

Mission Expansion Model

Introduction

In this chapter a multi-ethnic ministry model for Asian American churches will be introduced as an alternative to current Asian American ministries. This model is an attempt to build a bridge not only between the first and later generations of a particular ethnic group, but also between different ethnic groups. While the homogeneity model continues to enhance group dynamics, the Mission Expansion Model seeks to find some mission commonalities across different ethnic and language groups and to address the issues involved.

Multi-Ethnicity of Asian American English Ministry

Among the many challenges Asian American churches face, the need for an effective English language ministry is one of the most pressing. There are basically four approaches these churches have used in an attempt to meet this need. The first, and most common, is creating an English-speaking ministry within an Asian American church where the dominant language is not English. The other three methods involve English speakers going outside of the church. Under the second method, they would go to an Anglo church or any English-speaking congregation whose ethnic background is other than that of Asian. The third method involves starting a “Pan-Asian American” church whose members are mostly transgeneration or S&S generation, and which has no relationship to

the original church. The fourth method is starting a parachurch institution,¹ which has no connection to the traditional church structure.²

The most common way to address the need for an English-speaking ministry is to start one. The traditional vessel for creating this ministry is someone within the church, perhaps a staff member — youth director or education director — who starts an English ministry with the young people. At the beginning, this ministry would be composed of one ethnic group, but as it grows and its members begin to bring their friends from other ethnic groups to church, that begins to change. As more and more of these people, who are not of the original ethnic group, participate in these ministry gatherings, that ministry will eventually be recognized as a multi-ethnic Asian American ministry. This certainly is one way to develop a multi-ethnic ministry — natural development and growth.

Given the current demographic shifts, there is absolutely no doubt that the need for English-speaking Asian American ministries will continue to grow, and hopefully we will have the necessary leadership and facilities to satisfy this demand. The ethnic language ministry will continue as long as immigration continues, but will still eventually lose its primacy in Asian American churches. In the near future, the English ministry among these churches will become the primary ministry and the ethnic language ministry will slowly become secondary and diminish in size, even with continual migration and immigration. In the meantime, as Asian American churches continue to grow, more and more of them will

¹A parachurch institution is a fellowship with no traditional church structure that gathers together for worship and Bible study.

²Grace Sangok Kim, “Asian North American Youth: A Ministry of Self-Identity and Pastoral Care,” in People on the Way, ed. David Ng (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1996), 224.

require English ministries and will create them, mostly via the “natural growth” method described previously. Each of these English ministries, however, will not be composed of only one ethnic group. People are visual beings — they like to associate with people who look like them and have a similar racial and traditional background, even though they may not be the same ethnicity. Because of this, Asian Americans of various backgrounds will join a ministry that is composed of people with similar backgrounds, and this congregation will become multi-ethnic.

A New Approach to Asian American Ministry

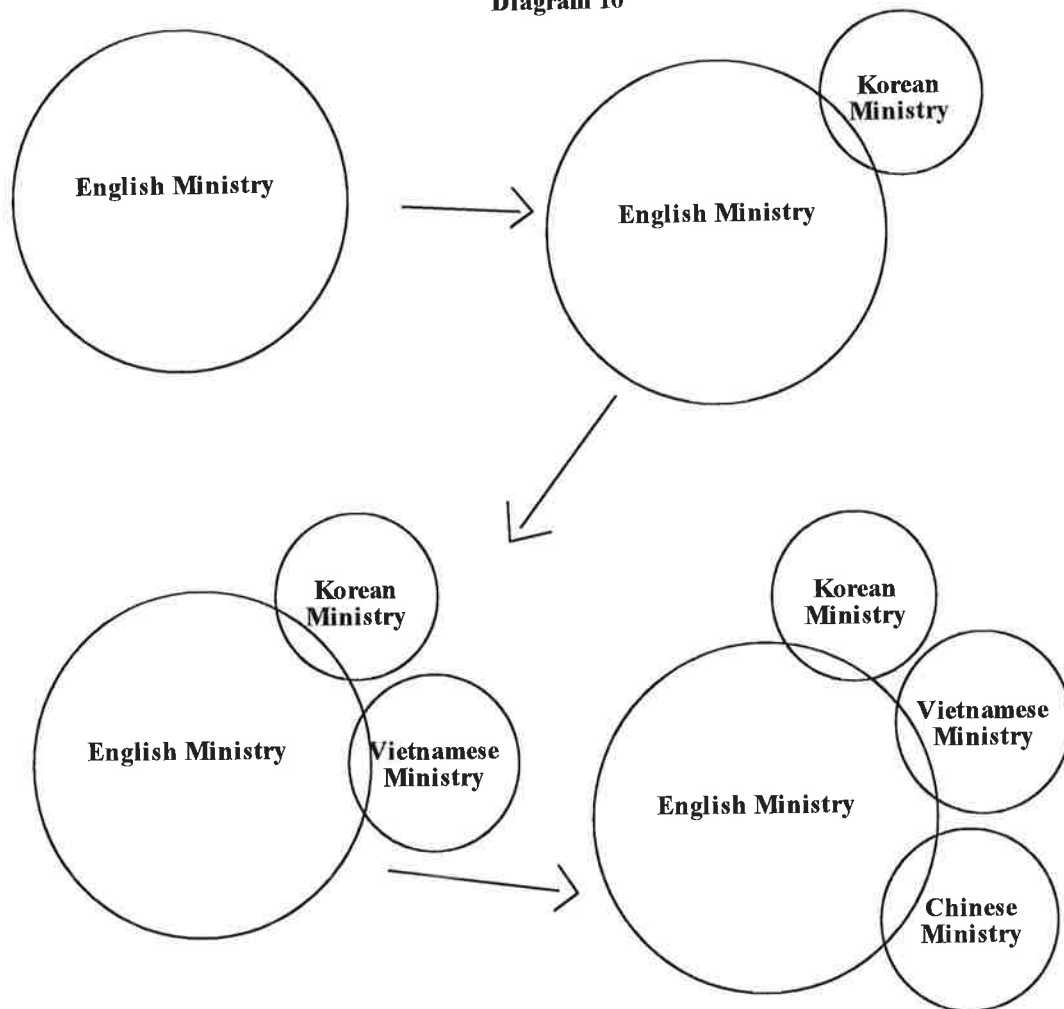
The Mission Expansion Model takes a different approach. It is not a byproduct of one or two persons from other ethnic groups joining the church and making it look like a multi-ethnic congregation. Rather, it takes an intentional approach to becoming a true multi-ethnic Asian American church. This model presupposes that the primary language a ministry uses is English, and is designed to be used by an English-speaking group that wants to reach out to various ethnic language groups. Specifically, using the Mission Expansion Model, a vital, established English-speaking ministry starts a new ethnic language ministry to bring the adults of that ethnic group into the church while involving the children in the English language ministry.

This model can be implemented by an English-speaking ministry within an ethnic language church, but in this case, it is imperative that both the English ministry and the ethnic language ministry have same vision. If the parent congregation does not share the English ministry’s vision, it may feel threatened because the English ministry’s outreach could be misunderstood as ignoring or going against the parent congregation. Thus, in

order to minimize possible resistance from the parent congregation, the vision must involve a joint venture by both congregations.

When an Asian American church is started as an English ministry, or an established ethnic language ministry starts an English-speaking group, there is great opportunity for it to be multi-ethnic as mentioned in the previous section. When the English ministry within an ethnic language congregation earns its primacy, it can continue with the existing language ministry while adding another language ministry. Then the church will have two ethnic minority language groups while the English ministry remains the central focus of the church, enabling the English-speaking people from both ethnic language groups to join the English ministry. If the church continues to do this, the English ministry will always remain central, and the ethnic language ministries will be relieved of the burden of providing leadership for an English language ministry. Diagram 10 demonstrates the core concept of the Mission Expansion Model, as well as its expandability.

Diagram 10



Another advantage to this approach is that it can make shared facility situations easier to handle. Most shared facility problems arise from each ministry treating the other strictly as a source of either additional income or facility. In these relationships, there is hardly any sense of joint venture in mission; each ministry is separate, and often there is no difference from a secular owner-tenant relationship. Instead of seeing each other as partners in mission and ministry, these churches use each other for their own survival. There is very little commitment from either side for each other's ministries. When this happens, small irritations can lead to major conflicts. Even when the churches realize the

importance of regarding each other as ministry partners, often they cannot overcome their various barriers and become one in Christ.

Some churches organize joint functions in an attempt to bring both groups closer together, but they are painfully reminded that bringing two different groups together is much harder than it seems and takes a lot more than a few joint functions. This is especially so when they were two separate groups in the beginning and neither gave birth to the other. The level of participation from both congregations in these events is minimal — there is no real sense of community. However, this is not a criticism of either party. It's only natural — who would choose to experience so much discomfort? In addition, committing to each other's ministry in a shared facility situation calls for a missionary spirit. Giving a few dollars to a mission field or homeless people is much easier than inviting them to live with us. When there is a minimum understanding, respect, and compassion for each other's ministry, it opens a lot of doors for conflicts.

But the Mission Expansion Model puts people into partnership in mission right from the start. A new ethnic language ministry can only be possible when existing ministries put their efforts together to make it happen. It is like giving birth to a child — when a new language ministry is launched, all the existing ministries will rejoice together because it is the fruit of their joint labor, and they can work together to make sure the new language ministry survives and flourishes. Because of this, small conflicts that arise in this shared facility setting tend to be much more manageable.

Church leadership expert Kennon L. Callahan is right when he says the Church needs to be a “mission outpost.”³ Global mission is possible here in the United States — the world has come to our doorstep.⁴ We need to take advantage of this opportunity to reach everyone we can. The Mission Expansion Model provides an opportunity, at least for Asian Americans, to work together to build the Kingdom of God. This does not mean, however, that this model is applicable only to Asian American churches. In fact, it can be applied to many other multi-ethnic and multi-lingual ministries.

Structure of the Mission Expansion Model

The idea behind the Mission Expansion Model is simple, but accomplishing its goals may not be an easy task. The concept raises many questions. How can an ethnic congregation reach out to another ethnic group when it has difficulty reaching out to its own kind? Some potential conflicts among the language groups can arise later in the process — is it worth the effort? These are difficult questions to answer. As to whether it is worth the effort, one must think about what the Church is called to be. It is always easier to keep the status quo and keep on with business as usual. But Christ did not call the Church to an easy task. The word *ἐκκλησία* means “to be called out” for a special purpose. What would be the purpose for the Church where there is a strong anti-immigrant movement in American society? If the Church cannot be a model of embracing people of different backgrounds, can we reasonably expect society to do so? Jesus

³Kennon L. Callahan, Effective Church Leadership (San Francisco: Harper + Row, 1990), 13-34.

⁴Ortiz, 28-33.

reminded us that we, the people of God – the Church, are the light and the salt of the world (Matt. 5:14-16).

In regards to the question about the possibility of one ethnic group reaching out to another, one must consider the effort a Christian mission. Yes, we have difficulty even reaching out to our own kind, but does that mean we should not reach out to anyone else until we reach every one of our kind? If so, then how can one validate foreign mission? The Mission Expansion Model can be viewed as a foreign mission within the United States. It requires missionary heart and zeal — it is not easy, but it can be done.

An entry program, which is geared toward non-Christian or unchurched people in which the participants are subtly invited to become part of the church, is required to draw outsiders into the church. Basically, it provides an opportunity for unchurched people to step into the church, and is often non-threatening and non-doctrinal. As we will see in Chapter 6, the Family Zone program provided an entry point for outsiders at Cornerstone UMC, and can be effectively adapted by Asian American churches for their own ministry expansion. However, there are many other possible entry programs. For example, Grace United Methodist Church in Riverside, California used sports as their entry program, although this church's purpose for their sports ministry was different from Cornerstone's purpose for Family Zone. Entry program possibilities are virtually limitless — any program that attracts people will work. One can simply begin the entry program when the church is ready to launch another language ministry. However, the entry program may take a long time to mature enough to lead into a language ministry. Its primary focus is to intentionally build relationships with its participants.

The strength of this model lies in what it can provide for both the first generation and the subsequent generations. It provides a place for parents to gather and worship in their own language, while providing an English-speaking ministry for their young people. We don't have to make the parents feel unwelcome because of their language limitation — after all, their stress from immigrant life is already overwhelming.

This model also provides a way for the first and subsequent generations to be a team in mission and ministry. As the church seeks to launch a new language ministry, all generations join in the effort to make it work. Further, the Mission Expansion Model can also provide an opportunity to build bridges between various Asian American communities. The English ministry can be the cornerstone that binds different ethnic groups into one church. Its structure literally proclaims that Christians can live together beyond the boundaries of ethnicity and culture.

As discussed previously, this model also has the possibility of reducing shared facility conflicts. Since the new language ministry is the result of the existing ministry's joint outreach effort, it becomes their baby. The church will do all they can to protect and provide for this ministry, which can result in a good relationship between the English-speaking group and the ethnic language group.

When adopting this model, after a church has started one new language ministry, it would not be advisable for it to start another right away or even soon after. The first one needs some time to settle in, build up, and become stable before another can be added.

Steps to Launching a New Language Ministry

1. Study the demographics of the community and determine what group to reach out to next.
2. Select the Mission Team, the people who will be responsible for launching the new language ministry. This Mission Team will determine the budget for the launching process, the salary for the new staff, and the timeline for launching the program.
3. Hire or invite a staff member to lead the new language ministry. This staff will be involved from the very first stage of planning for the launching process and developing an entry program.
4. Determine what entry program to use for the particular language group; create a new one if no existing program is suitable.
5. Implement the entry program.
6. Build relationships with the new entry program participants.
7. Launch the new language ministry with those participants, bringing them into the church.

The Challenges This Model Can Bring

Every good model has its own challenges. The Mission Expansion Model is no exception. When this model is implemented, one can expect at least a few challenges, which we will discuss in this section.

Inertia vs. Change. There is hardly any church that stands against evangelism and outreach programs. There is hardly any Christian who does not want his church to grow.

However, having another ethnic group as a part of their own church is not always easy. According to Peter Wagner, a church growth expert, one of the vital signs of a healthy church is that its membership is drawn from a homogeneous group. This is what he says about the dynamics of a homogeneous group.

A homogeneous group is simply a group of people who consider each other to be 'our kind of people.' They have many areas of mutual interest. They share the same culture. They socialize freely. When they are together they are comfortable and they feel at home.⁵

When a new language group is established, it is inevitable that some people would feel uncomfortable both in the existing ministry and in the new language group. Because they will be asked to participate in joint functions, such as occasional joint worship services and potlucks, some might feel this is coerced integration, and even retrogressive.⁶ While recognizing the possible uneasiness generated by this model, one must realize the enormous possibilities it creates.

Furthermore, it is not coerced integration. All language groups will be autonomous while the English-speaking group serves to bind them together as one church. The English-speaking group's role is natural, for they have a common language and similar cultural background. In addition, many members of the ethnic language ministries will have family members in the English-speaking group. When a church implements this model, there is an undeniable conflict between wanting everything to stay the way it is and

c. Peter

⁵~~Peter~~ Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, ^{rev.} 2nd ed. (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1984), 124.

⁶Oh-Dal Kwon, The Growth of the Korean Church in America, ~~Pasadena, CA~~ Master of Theology thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1986 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1986), 80. [↑]th.m.

wanting to change and expand. Change is not always welcome because it is not made without inconvenience, but it often brings freshness, new possibilities, and new life.

Risk is an important component of discipleship. People never adopt new ways of thinking and acting without trauma. Taking bold stands, no matter how well considered, is dangerous New paradigms for society and for self are disconcerting.⁷

Cornerstone United Methodist Church, where this model was first implemented, experienced this tension between inertia and change. The key leaders of this church wanted to make the change and experience the great possibilities it offered, but they were faced with those who did not. There were people who did not want any language group to come in because they perceived it as retrogressive, going back to the old ways. When the Korean language ministry was being planned, those who did not appreciate the idea of this new language ministry did not participate in any of the planning discussions. Then, when the church was ready to launch the new Korean language ministry, these people voiced their displeasure at having another ethnic group as part of their ministry. They wanted to remain an English-speaking Chinese American church although they claimed to have a vision of reaching out to all Asian Americans. Their notion of Asian Americans was limited to and included nothing more than Chinese Americans.

This kind of conflict is to be expected. After all, no one appreciates discomfort. However, one must think of this as a labor pain, part of giving birth to a new ministry. Giving birth to a child is never easy or painless, but it brings a new life with endless possibilities into the world.

⁷Bill Lane Doulos, Hearts on Fire, (Pasadena, Calif.: Castle Press, 1995), 53.

Integration of New Members. Another area of concern is the assimilation of the new language group's members into the life of the whole church. The members of the existing ministry, as well as those of the new, will require some time to get used to the change and to get to know each other. There must be some intentional programs implemented that bring everyone together and foster the relationship.

In the case of Cornerstone United Methodist Church, the fellowship between the two ministries, English and Korean, was very good. They had all programs jointly, except worship services and Bible studies — all seasonal programs, church picnics, retreats, and so on. But members of both ministries still felt somewhat uneasy with each other, mainly because of the language barrier. Hopefully, with a little time, the initial uneasiness will be lifted and they will join together in harmony. Both ministries need to put forth deliberate effort to make this integration happen.

Conflict Over Limited Space. As we have discussed, the possibility of shared facility conflicts would be greatly reduced with this model, but the author does not claim this model will eliminate them completely. In fact, they will come, but in a more manageable size. As both the ethnic language group and the English-speaking group grow, the church will inevitably face competition for space, which can easily result in conflict. When a church is planning to implement this model, it would be important to think about facility requirements and strategies to coordinate room usage. Who will use what rooms, when, and for how long should be discussed in detail and worked out to everyone's satisfaction during the planning stages. In order to coordinate facility usage once the language ministry is in place, regular staff meetings are a must and a master

calendar would be very helpful. A “Parish Board of Trustees”⁸ or “Property and Facility Committee” with equal representation from all language ministries to oversee facility usage is also recommended.

Leadership and Finance. This model requires all pastoral staff to be bilingual for effective and smooth communication between different groups. As a church seeks to reach out to a new language group, it must have a good understanding of which group to focus on, why this group instead of others, and seek out the potential leader for this new group in the planning stage. The entry program, then, must be planned, developed, and led under this potential leader’s guidance. This means the existing ministries will assume the financial burden for the new ministry until it can be self supporting and able to contribute in some real way to the viability of the whole ministry.

Summary

English ministry is one of the biggest concerns for the vast majority of Asian American churches. In the near future, English-language ministries will become increasingly important. Ethnic language ministry will not disappear completely, but they will become less important in comparison to English ministry. The most common method of starting an English ministry is to just create one and let it grow on its own. Eventually, this congregation will appear to be multi-ethnic as more people from outside the original ethnic group join.

⁸Cornerstone United Methodist and Orangethorpe United Methodist Churches have a joint Board of Trustees, called the “Parish Board of Trustees,” to oversee facility usage and coordination.

This chapter is about a better way to create a multi-ethnic church — through deliberate creation and nurturing. Once a church's primary ministry is English, it can implement the Mission Expansion Model and create an ethnic language ministry in order to expand its English ministry. As trans- or multi-generational families come to this church, its non-English speaking members will join the language ministry, and its English-speaking members will become part of the English ministry. This approach may help reduce shared facility conflicts at the same time that it grows the English ministry and intentionally creates a multi-ethnic church.

This model is not without its limitations. Everyone involved in creating the new ministry needs to share the same vision — something which can be very difficult. Problems can develop involving time conflicts, facility usage conflicts, integration of members, and so on. Planning for the new ministry needs to be very thorough in order to minimize these difficulties. The more contingencies that are planned for from the outset, the better the end result will be.

CHAPTER 6

Case Study: Cornerstone United Methodist Church

Introduction

In this chapter, an actual case where the Mission Expansion Model was implemented will be discussed. It was used at Cornerstone United Methodist Church in Fullerton, California.

Cornerstone has its own 3.5-acre facility, including a sanctuary, chapel, fellowship hall, education building with many rooms, and ample parking. Basically, it has room to grow. The facility, however, is not solely owned by Cornerstone, but is jointly owned with a sister church, Orangethorpe United Methodist Church. They have been in this relationship since April of 1992 and it has been very advantageous to both churches.

Cornerstone could not have been in any better condition or situation to expand its ministry, with no extra preparation necessary. Its pastor, at the time the church adopted the Mission Expansion Model, was a bilingual Korean American. His bilingual gift was one of the most important factors in adopting this model and moving toward launching a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual ministry. It was possibly the most valuable gift for this location, where the Korean American population is the most prominent among Asian Americans. He was not only able to communicate effectively in both languages, but to preach and minister as well.

Cornerstone has had a very clear vision for its ministry from its conception — “Serving English speaking Asian Americans in the Community.” Although they have had this vision from the start, the church has not made any definite progress toward becoming

what it intended to be, other than serving English-speaking Chinese Americans. There are a few Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, Vietnamese Americans, and Euro Americans in the congregation, but their number is so insignificant that it could be called an English-speaking Chinese-American Church. However, this church identifies itself as an Asian American church, hoping to reach out to a more diverse group.

Most of the Chinese-Americans in this church have a Cantonese background — not that they necessarily speak the language, but they are the descendants of those who spoke Cantonese and were familiar with its culture. Most of the members are second and third generation immigrants, well-established professionals, and hold high educational degrees.

General Environment

Cornerstone United Methodist Church is situated in west Fullerton where there is a heavy Asian American population. Although this is not the best-priced location in terms of real estate value, it is still in proximity to all the best-valued locations in Fullerton. Because of its favorable school districts, Fullerton has long been a preferred residential area for many, especially Asian Americans, to whom their children's education is a high priority.

Fullerton's socio-economic status could be categorized as middle-upper class with above average income. In general, the city is quiet, well maintained, and very attractive, qualities which have drawn a huge number of Asians with money and status.

As Cornerstone looked for ways to reach out to the Asians in the community, its staff spent a great amount of time studying the demographics of its surroundings. Based

on this study, they found that the highest population among Asian Americans in Fullerton was Korean, followed by Vietnamese and Chinese.¹

The Challenges Cornerstone Faced with Its Outreach

The location could not have been better for an Asian American ministry, but reaching out to them was not simple. Cornerstone's target group was English-speaking Asian Americans, which was a limited population to begin with. Most Asian Americans in the area were not monolingual English-speaking, but members of the first generation who spoke their own native language while their children spoke English. This made Cornerstone's outreach effort even more difficult — it sought to reach out to the whole family, but many adults with limited English felt that the church's invitation was for their children and not for them.

Although never intentional, the message Cornerstone communicated was, "You are welcome to come, but you may not understand anything and may not feel comfortable here with limited English." Because it provided no place for them, parents with limited English would need to attend another church if they decided to send their children to Cornerstone. As discussed earlier, Asian Americans are generally family-oriented, and their families are close-knit, so choosing a church that forces them to go to separate churches is not in their best interest. In short, Cornerstone needed to think of a new approach.

¹National Planning Data Corp., Demographic Tabulation for the United Methodist Church (Los Angeles: NPDA, 1993).

Cornerstone's Long Term Ministry Goal and Rationale

The majority of Cornerstone's leadership realized that building the English ministry without providing a place for people with limited English to worship was not the most effective way to reach out. They decided to apply the Mission Expansion Model, which would bring them a step closer to being a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual ministry in which the English ministry would be the central focus.

The rationale behind a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Asian American ministry is that an English-only ministry is too exclusive for this day and age. This was certainly true for Cornerstone, who had confined its target to a very limited group of people. As discussed previously, English ministry in Asian American churches evolved from their need to nurture their young people. Although the need for such ministries is beyond evident, holding fast to an English-only ministry could also reduce the effectiveness of overall ministry.

Asian American churches are going through a phase in which we are seeing the number of English-speaking attendees grow. However, the first generation is still the majority in immigrant society. We cannot ignore them and focus only on the English-speaking people. Now is the time to intentionally build a bridge between the first and the S&S generations. Unless we do so, it will be difficult to make a smooth transition to an S&S oriented church.

Implementation of the Mission Expansion Model at Cornerstone

Although Cornerstone had everything it needed to start an additional ministry, it still needed a way to reach out to the target people in the community. It needed a way to connect with people, an entry program.

Family Zone

Starting an additional ministry from scratch was not without its challenges. The leadership of the church did not know where to start or what to do. They did not know how the Lord would lead this ministry. This is where the Family Zone program came into the picture.

History of Family Zone. The history of Family Zone reveals how God was involved in this program. In July 1994, May Lou, an active member of Cornerstone and an elementary school teacher, went to a craft store to get some materials for the church Christmas Boutique, which was to be held in November. May ran into a woman named Susan Lee, a Korean American. Susan asked May some questions regarding a craft she was working on. May invited Susan and her six-year-old daughter, Jennifer, to her house to show her some examples. At her home May was able to share not only her knowledge in crafts but also about her church. When she heard about the church, Susan was very interested in Cornerstone UMC. Because it was difficult for Susan to communicate in English, May referred Susan to Paula, the pastor's wife, who speaks Korean.

Susan asked Paula about the education programs at Cornerstone for her daughter, Jennifer. Paula explained about the Children's Choir that was held twice a month when

the Young Married Couples met. Learning that Paula was a reading teacher at an elementary school, Susan requested Paula's assistance for her daughter. Paula offered to teach Jennifer English if Susan could gather more students.

In August of 1994, Cornerstone had a joint Vacation Bible School (VBS) with its sister church, Orangethorpe, in which some Korean Americans from the community participated. The Lord used this VBS to start an entry program. Four Korean families participated in this VBS, including Susan and her daughter Jennifer. In fact, these families were Susan's friends. This program provided a great opportunity to connect with these families.

The pastor found out that Susan and her friends were to stay in the United States for only a relatively short time. Their husbands were on work visas, working at the same company, and would go back to Korea in a few years. Although their stay in the United States would be short, they were looking for an opportunity to learn English. When they learned that Paula was willing to teach English to their children, they were excited.

The following month, September of 1994, the Family Zone program was launched with three families. Family Zone was not just for children; it was for the whole family. It was intended to be an entry program that would eventually lead to a language ministry.

The following is the mission statement of Family Zone.

The mission of Family Zone is to help Asian-American families to reach their God given Potential to the fullest. For the parents, it provides education in parenting and in Bible knowledge and application. For the student, it provides academic aid to compliment and supplement the skills and concepts taught in school as well as biblical knowledge and application. All language ministries that

Family Zone initiatives and starts will be part of Cornerstone United Methodist Church.²

Since the children needed to learn English fast, and this was the parents' first priority, Family Zone appealed to the parents. It wasn't just the parents who enjoyed it — the children did too. Jennifer, Susan's daughter, even quit her favorite tap dancing lessons because of a time conflict with Family Zone — she enjoyed Family Zone a lot more than the tap dancing. Two brothers stopped attending Tae Kwon Do to participate in Family Zone. The whole family joined the Church as members and became very active.

There were numerous stories like that. One of Cornerstone's strengths was its members' careers. Most of the members were professionals with high academic degrees, and many of them were teachers and engineers. Some of them volunteered to participate in this program, and their support was a great asset. Those who wanted to participate in Family Zone had to commit themselves to a covenant stating that they would participate in all sessions. If anyone wanted to be excused from any one session, that person needed to get permission from the group.

Family Zone's Role in Creating a Korean Language Ministry. Family Zone did two major things — one for the children, the other for the parents. It taught children English using the Bible with the hope that by using biblical stories they would develop a sound moral character. Its main emphasis, though, was not teaching the Bible but teaching English — the Bible was just a text. Its method of teaching focused on creative writing, knowing that most education in Asia depends heavily on memorization and drills,

²Daesun Chung, Family Zone Handbook (Fullerton, Calif.: Cornerstone United Methodist Church, 1995), 2.

and lacks in developing creativity. Family Zone also provided an opportunity for children to develop analytical abilities by providing many different puzzles.

The program also provided educational opportunities for the parents. None of the parents understood the stress children go through in crossing cultural and language barriers. They did not know how to guide their children in a cross-cultural setting. So the pastor of Cornerstone, who is an immigrant himself, taught the parents about parenting in a cross-cultural setting, biblical models of parenting, both success stories and failure stories, and eventually led them to Disciple Bible Study, which is an intensive 34-week Bible study.

Some of the parents had never been to church, so starting with parenting in a cross-cultural setting and slowly leading them into Bible study was an excellent way to lead them to Christ. Family Zone quickly grew to serve six families within three months. As they were studying the Scripture, the parents wanted to start their own worship service in their own language. So, after about nine months of the Family Zone program, Cornerstone was able to start a Korean language ministry for the parents with 14 adults, which quickly grew to 20. The children, of course, joined the English ministry from the start.

Family Zone was the key program in starting the Korean Language ministry, as demonstrated in this section. Since Family Zone is merely an entry program for the Mission Expansion Model, Cornerstone can continue to expand in this fashion. When they are ready to start another language ministry, they may implement the same or a similar program and further expand Cornerstone's ministry.

Summary

Cornerstone, whose ministry was in English, was ready to expand. It had all the resources it needed, and even had a program in place. However, it was alienating its target family with its existing approach.

Cornerstone realized it needed to do something different, so it implemented the Mission Expansion Model in order to effectively reach out to its target, Korean Americans. It created an entry program, Family Zone. Family Zone provided services that were much needed by these families, initially without any emphasis on the Bible. Eventually the program led into an intensive Bible study, and from there, it was a short step to creating a new ministry. By that time, the parents involved in the program felt comfortable sending their kids to the English ministry, because they had a program of their own to be involved in.

Using the Mission Expansion Model, Cornerstone expanded its English ministry by receiving the young people into the English ministry, which was its main focus. At the same time, its overall ministry was expanded by creating the English language ministry, which provided a place for those who spoke little or no English. A lot of planning was involved, but the fruit of its labor was worth it.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

Asian American Ministry is going through a transition, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. In order to minister effectively in this context, we need to continue to develop new models for ministry.

Asian American Churches usually have many predicaments: lack of facility, a need for effective English ministry, lack of leaders for existing English ministry as well as future ministries, and a lack of vision to carry the Church into the future. As discussed previously, none of these is a simple problem to solve. They require creative approaches.

At the present time, the majority of Asian American families have a language barrier within themselves, which raises a serious question about the effectiveness of evangelism. Neither ethnic language churches nor English-only congregations can effectively meet the needs of Asian American families. It will usually neglect either one or the other. Asking parents with limited English to speak or be ministered to only in English is not realistic; at the same time, asking them to go to other churches while asking the children to continue to participate in the English congregation is not very people friendly, nor is it effective evangelism. In fact, many visiting families made the comment that while they were interested in Cornerstone's English ministry for the sake of their children, they themselves felt very uncomfortable not being able to speak their own language. As long as the parents feel uncomfortable, Cornerstone's outreach, or any outreach, will not be successful.

The Mission Expansion Model is not a blanket solution for all the challenges faced by Asian American churches. No one expansion model or mission approach could solve all the problems Asian American churches encounter. However, the Mission Expansion Model provides a viable solution to a major challenge, namely creating and expanding an English ministry without alienating non-English speaking adults. It was certainly effective for Cornerstone, and can provide similar opportunities for other churches in comparable situations.

This study is not exhaustive. An important area for additional research would be further exploring the management and transformation of conflicts in multi-ethnic/multi-lingual situations. This area relates not only to the Mission Expansion Model but also to multi-ethnic ministry in general.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Reference Works

- Barclay, William, trans. The Acts of the Apostles. Rev. ed. Daily Study Bible Series. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976. ^{Remove underlining}
- Barna, George. The Frog in the Kettle: What Christians Need to Know About Life in the Year 2000. Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1990.
- Bruce, F. F. The Acts of the Apostles. London: Tyndale Press, 1951.
- Burroughs, Prince Emmanuel. Growing a Church. Nashville: ^{Convention} ~~Covenant~~ Press, 1936.
- Callahan, Kennon L. Effective Church Leadership: Building on the Twelve Keys. ^{San Francisco:} ~~New~~ York: ~~Harper Collins~~ ^{Harper & Row,}, 1990.
- Chang, Edward T., and Jeannette Diaz-Veizades. Ethnic Peace in the American City: Building Community in Los Angeles and Beyond. New York: New York University Press, 1999.
- Chung, Daesun. Family Zone Handbook. Fullerton, Calif.: Cornerstone United Methodist Church, 1995.
- Cenkner, William, ed. The Multicultural Church: A New Landscape in U.S. Theologies. New York: Paulist Press, 1996.
- DeYoung, Curtiss. Reconciliation: Our Greatest Challenge--Our Only Hope. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1997.
- Doulos, Bill Lane. Hearts on Fire: The Evolution of an Urban Church. Pasadena, Calif.: Castle Press, 1995.
- Flew, R. Newton. ^{2nd ed.} Jesus and His Church: A Study of the Idea of the Ekklesia in the New Testament. London: Epworth Press, 1943.
- Gossett, Thomas F. Race: The History of an Idea in America. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963.
- Hosokawa, Bill. Nisei: The Quiet Americans. New York: William Morrow, 1969.
- Hsu, Francis L. K. The Challenge of the American Dream: The Chinese in the United States. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing, 1971.
- Hundley, Norris, Jr., ed. The Asian American: The Historical Experience. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Clio Press, 1976.
- Kim, Grace Sangok. "Asian North American Youth: A Ministry of Self-Identity and Pastoral Care." In People on the Way: Asian North Americans Discovering Christ, Culture, and Community ed. David Ng, 201-27. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1996.
- Ladd, George E. A Theology of the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974.

- Lee, Jung Young. Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Lyman, Stanford. Chinese Americans. New York: Random House, 1974.
- McGavran, Donald. Understanding Church Growth. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1980.
- Miner, P. S. "Church, Idea Of." In The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. I. ~~ed.~~ Ed. G. A. Buttrick. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962.
- National Planning Data Corp. Demographic Tabulation for the United Methodist Church. Los Angeles: NPDA, *date ?*
- Ortiz, Manuel. One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
- Rhoads, David. The Challenge of Diversity: The Witness of Paul and the Gospels. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, ~~1989~~ *1996* *Latimer Studies, 47. - do not underline*
- Root, John. Building Multi-Racial Churches. Vol. ~~47~~ *47* of Latimer Studies. Oxford: Latimer House, 1994.
- Rosen, Ceil, and Moishe Rosen. Christ in the Passover: Why is This Night Different? Chicago: Moody Press, 1978.
- Royce, Anya Peterson. Ethnic Identity: Strategies of Diversity. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.
- Ryu, Tongshik. A History of Christ United Methodist Church, 1903-1988. Honolulu: Christ United Methodist Church, 1988.
- Saucy, Robert L. The Church in God's Program. Chicago: Moody Press, 1972.
- Spittler, Russell P. The Church. Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1977.
- Stott, John R. W. One People. Downer's Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1971.
- Tan, Paul Lee. Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times. Rockville, Md.: Assurance Publishers, 1979.
- Wagner, ~~Peter~~ *C. Peter*. Your Church Can Grow. ~~2nd~~ *Rev.* ed. Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1984.
- Ziglar, Zig. See You at the Top. Gretna, *La.!* Pelican Publishing, 1977.
- Zizioulas, John D. Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985.

Theses and Dissertations

- Cho, Chun-II. The History and Prospects of Korean Immigrant Churches. D. Min. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1984. Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1984. 03-65819.

- OK
J.
- Fong, Kenneth X. U. Insights for Growing Asian-American Ministries. D. Min. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1990. Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1991. 91-09527.
- Han, Young-Taek. The Church as a Reconciling Community: Toward the Mission of Korean Immigrant Churches. D. Min. project, Claremont School of Theology, 1996. Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1996. 96-29078.
- Heer, Sandra A. Theology and Ministry in a Shared Facility. D. Min. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1993. Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1993. 93-19333.
- Kim, Nak-In. A Model Ministry to Transitional and Second Generation Korean-Americans. D. Min. project, Claremont School of Theology, 1991. Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1991. 91-35033.
- Kwon, Oh-Dal. The Growth of the Korean Church in America. ~~Pasadena~~. Th.M. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1986. Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1986. 13-27887.
- Liu, Felix. A Comparative Study of Selected Growing Chinese Churches in Los Angeles County. ~~Pasadena~~ A D. Miss. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1981. Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1981. 81-19176.
- Paek, Woon Young. Worldview Change and the Korean American Youth Ministry in the Korean Immigrant Church. ~~Pasadena~~. Th.M. Thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1989. Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1989. 13-36430.
- Shim, Steve Sangkwon. A Clinical Case Study of "Haan" Experiences among Korean Immigrants in Southern California: A Cross-Cultural Pastoral Counseling Perspective. ~~Claremont~~. School of Theology at Claremont, 1990. Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1990. 34164.
- PhD diss.,